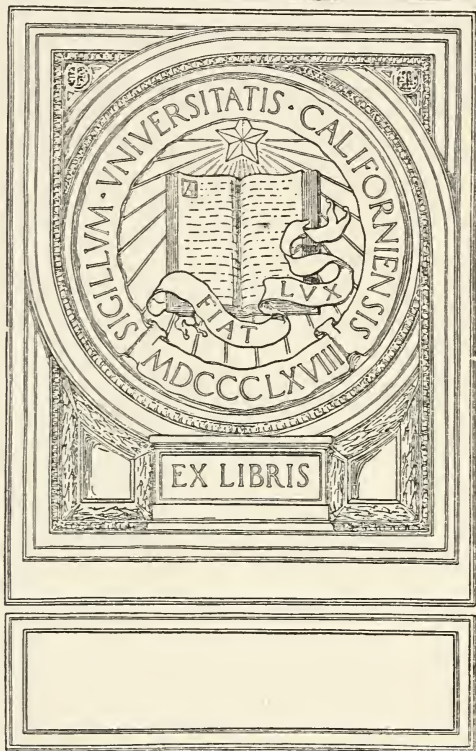


THE ART OF PAINTING  
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



EDMUND VON MACH

GIFT OF  
A. F. Morrison























EDMUND C. TARBELL  
Girl Crocheting

# THE ART OF PAINTING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

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DEAR READER:

If you too are caught up by the whirlpool of interest in modern painting, and are bewildered by conflicting claims, this little book is for you. You need not look for epoch-making art criticism, nor for clever, pithy sayings. Read these pages, please, not for their own sake, but to assure yourself, should this be possible, a less prejudiced mind for the enjoyment of modern art. The field is big, so is the ocean, but, as somebody has said, "You need not swim in the whole of it at any one time." With best wishes for success and pleasure,

THE AUTHOR

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS



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Attention is called to the *Catalogue of Books on Art* issued by Charles Scribner's Sons and containing an almost complete list of American, and easily accessible English, books on art.





# THE ART OF PAINTING

## CHAPTER I.

### FRENCH PAINTING

The complete history of French painting in the nineteenth century will never be written; for so incredibly extensive is the work and so universal and comprehensive the genius of the men who from France dominated the art of the world, that no lifetime is long enough to understand these men and their ideas in detail. Movement followed upon movement with lightning-like rapidity, and hardly was the essence of one grasped before it was absorbed by another, or irresistibly swept away by a third. The men themselves changed. Starting with one idea and pursuing it sincerely, they soon detected another worthier one and followed that. In France, as everywhere, there were second-rate men during this period, but rarely was the list of first-rate men so full as

it was in the nineteenth century. And the momentous thing is that every new idea found not one but many a genius eager to serve it. Art in France was advanced, to use a simile, not by a team of average perfection but by one of picked men.

He who desires to understand, or at least to begin to understand, the several movements of French art, must first familiarize himself with the conditions which made them possible.

The success of the French Revolution and the establishment of the galleries of the Louvre as *Musée nationale des Arts* are the most important factors. The people, not kings, are sovereign. Art, like everything else, exists for them,—for all of them and not for a chosen few. In future the artists will have to appeal to the people; and since the people as a whole are naturally more diversified in tastes than was the comparatively small class of men and women whose position depended on the approval of a court, the variety of their tastes demanded a far more variegated art than had been exacted of the artists formerly. Or, to look at the reverse of this proposition, an

artist of new individual ideas could now hope to find approval in some quarters at least, while heretofore the disapproval of the court would have meant failure for him. That the people at large were more readily swayed by the force of a new genius than the conservative aristocracy had been is also easily perceived, so that the rapidity with which this or that school gained prominence in the nineteenth century is not surprising.

These remarkably favorable conditions for the growth of individual art had not come to pass with one bold stroke; not even the establishment of a republic could have done that. For more than a century the way for them had been prepared by trifling events and almost unnoticeable evolutions of popular sentiment. As regards popular interest in art the establishment of public exhibitions had been of great importance. The first exhibition took place in 1673 and, beginning with 1737, others followed regularly in the *salon carré* in the Louvre. It is this salon which has given the now famous name to the annual exhibitions of the *Société des artistes français*, which to-day are held in the *Palais de l'Industrie*, while

rival salons are conducted by the *Société nationale des beaux arts* in a gallery on the *champ de Mars*. The first large English exhibition took place in 1760, and the first German exhibition in 1786.

Moreover the growth of the public press, desirous of speaking with authority on all subjects, stimulated public interest, especially when the company of art critics appeared and began to make extensive use of its columns. Soon art magazines were established, at first without illustrations, but later with reproductions of constantly increasing worth. In short, everything was done to familiarize the people with what occurred in the world of art.

Thus far all the causes which stimulated the growth of art are readily understood. The most important factor, however, is not so easily perceived. One may well ask what it was that turned the minds of the people so forcibly to painting rather than to sculpture or architecture. What was it that made more men of genius arise in France at this time than had ever before appeared in any one country at any one time? Was it Heaven, to speak with Vasari, who had taken

compassion on humanity? These are questions which cannot be answered, so that one must rest content with realizing that some inexplicable forces were at work shaping art and pressing the various men into their service.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the classic revival held its sway. "Form is everything" was the watchword of the school which David led. But hardly had the men of this school formulated their creed and begun to practice it when Géricault and most especially Delacroix pointed out that sentiment and passion are more satisfactorily conveyed by color, light, and indistinctness than by clearly defined outlines. "Let each man express his passions and emotions; let him feel what he is doing," was the maxim of the so-called Romanticists. In their technique they strove to develop color, as the Classicists labored to master drawing. At first both schools had their ardent admirers, and later each had followers who endeavored to learn the best of both without going to their extremes. And then there were some independent workers, and others who laid less stress on how they painted than on

what they painted. The Napoleonic era tempted them to paint military pictures, while the interest of great numbers of people who did not understand the fight between the Classicists and the Romanticists induced them to paint genre pictures, or, in a lighter vein, to portray humorous anecdotes and manners. Others again, dissatisfied with existing political conditions, painted incidents which were meant to teach lessons in sociology.

While all this took place there appeared the champion of a new cause. "You paint men and beasts and trees," Courbet seemed to shout,—"subjects which are taken from nature,—but you are not true to nature either with your lines or with your colors. Truth to nature is the only right thing in art. Don't reason, don't dream. Just open your eyes, see, and then paint what you see." This was the maxim of the Realists.

Strangely enough, with one important modification, it was also the maxim of the great landscape painters of the Barbizon school; for although "Back to nature" was their motto, they held that there is more in nature than you can readily see.



You must study her with an open mind and an open heart. Only thus will she reveal to you her mysteries. Practicing what they taught, they created what is called "the intimate landscape," — *le paysage intime*.

Then out of this movement quite naturally grew the one called Impressionism, which has always been singularly misunderstood. The time had come when people drew logical conclusions from the trend of art, which had been away from nature as people think of her and toward nature as she is. To the followers of this new movement, nature as she is means as she appears to the observant eye. Naturally the observant eye for them was their own eye, so that large play was given to idiosyncrasies. Often, indeed, nature was probably held responsible for defects of the artist's own vision. The excesses which were thus perpetrated brought ridicule on the movement. Its tenets, nevertheless, are fundamentally so true that they have revolutionized the entire art of painting. Abstract nature in pictures has disappeared, and everywhere allowances are made to the peculiarities of human vision. Most especially is this

true of the use of color. The great problem which the Impressionists set themselves was to represent outdoor light in all its brightness. To do this accurately is impossible. No pigment is sufficiently luminous to reproduce sunlight. Devices, therefore, had to be introduced by which colors would seem to do what they actually could not do. No people have been so successful in accomplishing this as the French, and the master of them is Monet.

By the side of these Impressionists another school grew up, composed of the so-called New Idealists. These artists learned many points in technique from Monet and his followers, but differed fundamentally from them in their conceptions of what constitutes a worthy subject. To them the world of ideas was as real as that of physical vision. Borrowing their forms from the latter, they created another of great beauty, appealing everywhere to the nobler, the contemplative side of men. In the pursuit of this aim they did not always feel bound by strict adherence to truth; and since many of them leaned toward the decorative style of art, they often sacrificed actuality to pleasing outline.



*Jacques Louis David* (1748–1825) was the first man of genius to break with the traditions of the eighteenth century. A distant relative of Boucher, he was at first closely wrapped up in the teachings of this great man, although his own teacher, Joseph Marie Vien, had already begun to set out on a path of his own. David won the *prix de Rome* when he was twenty-seven years old, and before setting out for Italy solemnly declared that the classic movement, which had begun with Winckelmann's publications in 1756, should not corrupt him. "The antique," he said, "lacks action; it does not move." He had, however, hardly reached Rome when this maligned antique drew him into its nets and made him its most zealous proselyte. No other lover of the classic ideals has had such influence on art as David. He swept everything before him — France, Italy, Germany, and in part the Netherlands — and there is probably no country that has not felt the power of his personality. David could never have accomplished his successes if, in addition to being an admirer of form, he had not been also a

painstaking and loving student of nature. "His one great fault," says Professor Gensel, "was that he did not seek beauty in the individual, but in the average." As a result his art was not "natural and free, but cold and pedantic." Cold it is, to be sure, but it is that coldness which suggests grandeur and nobility, and which compels the admiration of the spectator in spite of himself.

Four hundred and twenty artists of all nationalities are mentioned as pupils of David; few, however, have made names for themselves. The personality of the master was too powerful. As a result his school soon declined, and would have done so even sooner if *Jean Dominique Ingres* (1780-1867) had not infused new life into it. Ingres was attracted not only by the antique but also by the later paintings of Raphael, which taught him grace. His color was always subservient to his drawing, while his modeling, especially of nude figures, revealed the unexcelled master of form. He was at his best in portraits and in pictures of single figures, but was unsuccessful in large compositions.



WILLIAM ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU

Madonna Consolatrix



The fact that Ingres sought inspiration in part from Raphael makes a bond between the classic movement under his leadership and the so-called Romanticists, for these men also turned to the masters of a more immediate past. The fundamental difference between the two schools lies in the contempt which the Romanticists showered on the antique, and the ardor with which they defended the superiority of color over form. *Théodore Géricault* (1791-1824) was the first of this school, but he died too young to become its leader. This honor was reserved for *Eugène Delacroix* (1799-1863). The art development of this man is best summed up in the words which he himself entered in his diary shortly before his death, "To be a feast for the eyes is the first merit of a picture." Color and all its enticing charms were the stars which he followed, unmindful of the classic-academic disapproval. They called him "the painter with the intoxicated brush," or "the scourge of art," but he steadfastly followed his ideals. The singular greatness of his artistic personality is clearly seen in his decorations of the library in the

Bourbon Palace and in the Apollo Gallery in the Louvre. Unlike most contemporary painters of wall decorations, he knew how to adapt both his conceptions and his compositions to the spaces which he had to decorate.

The first Frenchman to visit the Orient and to bring home with him a haunting love of the gayety of southern light and warmth was *Alexandre Decamps*. Delacroix journeyed to Algiers directly afterward, and it soon became the custom for artists to visit these foreign countries. Naturally fond of colors, their sojourns in southern climes increased their endeavors to produce voluptuous symphonies in color. Sometimes they succeeded, sometimes they failed. "Color cooks" they have been called, but it must be conceded that their dishes are often delicious.

In the matter of subjects the Romanticists delighted in anything that promised a rich and suggestive coloring. Their minds were thus readily turned to the history and legends of the Middle Ages. It is this choice of subjects which connects *Paul Delaroche* (1797-1856) with the followers of Delacroix, although he was more interested in the

subjects themselves than in their execution, and in this respect was more closely akin to the German Romanticists than to his French confrères.

The most famous of the pupils of Delaroche was *Thomas Couture* (1815-1879) who combined exquisite drawing with beautiful coloring, and who gained even greater influence by his remarkable gift as teacher than by his pictures. In his most successful pictures he struck a lighter vein, showing himself a man of humor in his scenes from the lives of Harlequin and Pierrot. Similarly ready to break away from tradition, *Georges Michel* (1763-1843) may be said to have been one of the first to discover the beauty of French landscape. He painted Nature not as she looked in Italy but as she was at home. In his lifetime he was little known. Running away from school, eloping with a laundress ere he was sixteen, ostracized from the *salon* in 1814, and poor all his life, still he worked on steadily until he died in 1843 at the age of eighty. Sometime during his long life he made a business of restoring pictures. In this profession he probably became acquainted with the great Dutch artists, whose



influence shows in many of his compositions, notably those portraying scenes in Montmartre.

The exploits of Napoleon I on the battlefield suggested to many artists the desirability of painting military scenes. *Horace Vernet* (1789–1863), best known for this class of work, was one of the first to take it up, although he painted along other lines in his youth. Perhaps the most successful of all military painters, barring Meissonier, was *Alphonse de Neuville* (1836–1885), whose pictures are spirited and at the same time delicate in finish, giving evidence of the fine caliber of his artistic disposition.

*Ernest Meissonier* (1815–1891), the “darling of the gods”—if success in one’s lifetime is an indication—and the great favorite of the people, followed a style of painting so utterly at variance with the artistic tenets of to-day that he has been displaced from his pedestal of fame, —unjustly, we may be sure, for popular verdicts are apt to go to extremes. Meissonier held that as all objects of nature were composed of well-arranged atoms, many of which are too small to be seen by the naked eye, so in a picture all





THE WILLOWS NEAR ARRAS

After the painting by Corot

TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
AT THE  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
NEW YORK

details deserved to be finished with such care that the full complement of their beauties could be detected only under the magnifying glass. The effect of the whole, in consequence, is sacrificed to the charm of details, but if one takes time to study these, one discovers new beauties, both of coloring and of drawing, and understands why his pictures have sold at the rate of over one thousand dollars per square inch.

At first Meissonier painted small genre pictures, but later he turned to military scenes, and by these made his reputation in the world at large. He painted only what he could actually see, and for his large compositions had everything prepared, down to the detail of an overturned cannon or the traces of horses' hoofs in the melting snow. The longer one looks at his pictures the more points of scenic interest one finds, and the farther and farther one grows away from the mood into which the first view of them might, and certainly should, have placed one. Meissonier appeals to the orderly intellect. The whole mysterious province of human sensibilities he leaves untouched.

The same is true, although to a lesser degree, of some of the so-called Semi-Classicists, who really are the successors of the David school, although they have not refrained from learning lessons from various other movements. *Alexandre Cabanel* (1823-1889) and *Paul Baudry* (1828-1886) were essentially painters of the seductive beauty of women. *William Adolphe Bouguereau* (1825-1905) won fame with the elegance and sensuality of his mythological, historical, and religious pictures. His technique was perfect, so that one may justly regret that he did not aspire to a higher and more lasting level of art.

The best known of all the Semi-Classicists was *Jean Léon Gérôme* (1824-1904), a versatile man, a scientific observer, and at heart a lover of details. The wealth of his subjects makes it difficult to classify him; he painted mythological, historical, and oriental scenes, and later did not despise even genre. Everywhere one finds the same perfection of technique and the same intellectual and orderly disposition of details, all of which are carefully executed. "A man of great

learning in many departments," so Professor Van Dyke says of him, "he is no painter to be sneered at, and yet not a painter to make the pulse beat faster or to arouse the æsthetic emotions."

If it is difficult to classify Gérôme with any particular school, it is impossible to do this with a large number of artists who showed so much independence that they deserve to be mentioned as individuals.

*Pierre Paul Prud'hon* (1758-1823) seems to have offered a place of refuge in his pictures to everything that David considered unmanly and unworthy of art. "He is the Boucher, the Watteau, of our time," David nevertheless said of him; "suffer him to be as he is; his influence on our school, as it is at present, will not be harmful." And Prud'hon himself is quoted as saying, "I cannot and I will not see with the eyes of others; their spectacles do not fit me." He was fond of soft light, youthful bodies, and the charm of innocence.

As portrait painter *Mme. Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun* (1755-1842) has made a name for herself, being best known for the pictures of herself

and daughter, in which the same ideals that guided Prud'hon can be recognized. Her best work dates from the eighteenth century, although she lived half her life in the nineteenth century and died in 1842, eighty-six years of age.

Born one year after Mme. Lebrun had died, *Henri Regnault* (1843-1871) early promised a brilliant career. Unfortunately it was cut short by his untimely death in the Franco-Prussian War. Naturally his fellow-citizens consider his promise as almost the equivalent of actual achievement, and rank him as one of their best artists. In color he has been declared to be the equal of Delacroix, but in choice of subjects he stands alone. His fiery temper made him select scenes of horror, in which the most somber of his Spanish contemporaries might have delighted. It is impossible to judge what he would have accomplished if he had lived longer.

*Jules Élie Delaunay* (1828-1892) made his mark as an ardent admirer of the early Italian Renaissance, and, although not a genius in the sense of David or Delacroix, infused into his pictures a spirit of artistic dignity which will





THE RETURN TO THE BARNYARD





preserve his name as that of a true artist when many of the Classicists and Romanticists will have been forgotten. He was also singularly successful in portraiture.

With *Gustave Courbet* (1819–1878) there came a revolution into the world of art. He has been called a “painter-animal,” and indeed the delicacies of human intercourse were unknown to him both in painting and in life. He was for French art what George Bernard Shaw has set out to be for the English stage, both men endeavoring to supplant idealism, as they interpret existing conditions, with realism. “The galleries should remain closed for twenty years,”<sup>1</sup> shouted Courbet, “so that the moderns might at last begin to see with their own eyes. . . . As for Mr. Raphael there is no doubt that he painted some interesting portraits, but I cannot find any ideas in them. . . . I have studied the art of the old masters and of the more modern. I have tried to imitate the one as little as I have tried to copy the other, but out of the total knowledge of tradition I have wished to draw a firm and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Muther, *A History of Modern Painting*, Vol. II, p. 510.

independent sense of my own individuality. . . . I am a sheer realist, which means a loyal adherent of the truth which is true. . . . Realism can only exist by the representation of things which the artist can see and handle. . . . The grand painting which we have stands in contradiction with our social conditions, and ecclesiastical painting in contradiction with the spirit of the century. It is nonsensical for painters of more or less talent to dish up themes in which they have no belief,—themes which could only have flowered in some epoch other than our own. Better paint railway stations with views of places through which one travels, with likenesses of great men through whose birthplace one passes, with engine houses, mines, and manufactories; for these are the saints and miracles of the nineteenth century.”

Courbet was as uncompromising in his art as he was in his speech; he was a straightforward man, but had the finer qualities left out of his make-up. He despised the choice of pleasing subjects and was antagonistic to the sensuous charm of color, so that a certain somber brown

characterizes his pictures. One cannot love either the man or his work, but one stands aghast with a sense almost of admiration before the boldness of this "painter-animal."

Other men followed the lead of Courbet without entirely losing their place by the side of a beauty-loving humanity. Among the best known are *Théodule Ribot* (1823-1891), who has been compared with the Spaniard, Ribera, and *Carolus Duran*, who began with powerful themes taken from the life of the common people, and who later achieved notable successes with his strong portraits of women. He was one of the teachers of the American, John Singer Sargent, by whom he has been surpassed in brilliancy of color, while he has remained without an equal in the spontaneity and convincingness of his conceptions. Another excellent portrait painter is *Léon Bonnat* (1833—).

The teachings of Courbet, whose motto, one might say, was "Back to nature," were followed by a set of artists who assembled in the neighborhood of Barbizon and Fontainebleau. These artists, however, followed Courbet's teachings

in their own peculiar way; for with his coarseness, for instance, they had nothing in common. *Jules Dupré* (1812-1889), the oldest of four famous landscapists, delighted in the play of the clouds in the heavens, so that his land is often but a necessary complement of the composition. Light is the charm of his pictures, and color a means of expressing its multifarious aspects in a clouded sky. "He constantly sought new color recipes, and put the pigments on the canvas so thick that his landscapes are easily recognized." *Narciso Virgilio Diaz de la Peña* (1808-1876), a Spaniard who died in France, had perhaps the least powerful personality of the Barbizon quartet, but he was an amiable painter of exquisite taste, both in design and in coloring.

The man of strength among these artists was *Théodore Rousseau* (1812-1867). He really was the first to appreciate that nature has a heart, that there is a life which only the contemplative mind perceives. He was a no less ardent student of nature than Courbet, but he went deeper and did not stop with external accidents. With him began the so-called intimate landscape.



OXEN PLOWING

From the painting by Rosa Bonheur





The best qualified by nature, however, to understand her mysteries was *Jean Baptiste Camille Corot* (1796-1875). The points in which he differs from Rousseau are thus summed up by Professor Muther: "In Rousseau a tree is a proud, toughly knotted personality, a noble self-conscious creation; in Corot it is a soft, tremulous being rocking in the fragrant air, in which it whispers and murmurs of love. Corot did not care to paint the oak, the favorite tree with artists who have a passion for form, nor the chestnut, nor the elm, but preferred to summon amid the delicate play of sunbeams the aspen, the poplar, the alder, the birch with its white slender stem and its pale, tremulous leaves, and the willow with its light foliage." The feeling of Corot toward nature is beautifully set forth in one of his letters<sup>1</sup> to Dupré. "One rises early, three o'clock in the morning, before the sun is up, and takes a place at the foot of a tree. One looks and waits. At first one does not see much. Nature resembles a white veil whence barely the profile of a few masses detach

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts from the letter are here translated.

themselves. Bing! the sun brightens, he has not yet torn away the haze beyond which lie hidden the meadow, the valley, the hills of the horizon. . . . Bing! bing! the first ray of sunlight — a second ray. The little flowers awake with joy. On all there sparkles a drop of dew. The leaves stir in the morning breeze, and in the foliage invisible birds raise a song. . . . The gods of love on wings of butterflies descend on the meadows and stir the tall grass. Nothing is seen, but everything is there. The entire landscape is behind the transparent veil of mist. And then the mist rises — rises, and discloses the river streaked with silver, the pastures, trees, huts, and the fleeting background. At last one recognizes everything at which one before only guessed." And so Corot lives with his friend through one of his glorious out-of-door days, and closes thus: "Nature goes to sleep, while the fresh evening air sighs in the leaves of the trees, and dew studs with pearls the velvety lawns. Nymphs flutter away, hide themselves, and wish they were seen. Bing! a star in the sky; it sticks a little head on the surface of the pond. Charming



star, whose twinkle is increased by the shivering waters, you are looking at me; you are winking your eye and smiling. Bing! a second star appears in the water. Welcome, welcome, fresh and charming stars! Bing! bing! bing! three, six, twenty stars—all the stars of the heavens—have met at a rendezvous in this happy pond. Things grow darker. The pond alone shines; it is swarming with stars. The sun has set, but the inner sun of the soul, the sun of art, is rising. Good! good! My picture is done.”

Little needs to be added. He who lives one day thus with Corot understands the art of this great, lovable man. Corot lived to be almost eighty years of age and spent the last forty years in close touch with nature. “Last night,” he said on his deathbed, “I saw in a dream a landscape with a sky all rosy. It was charming, and still stands before me quite distinctly; it will be marvelous to paint.” How many landscapes, we may exclaim with Professor Muther, may he not have thus dreamed and painted from the recollected vision!

Closely allied with these four landscape painters were several painters of animals. *Constant*

*Troyon* (1810-1865) is unequaled in the intimacy which he reveals between the grazing cattle and the pasture land. *Émile Van Marcke* (1827-1890) and *Rosa Bonheur* have gained considerable reputation, especially in the United States.

Not animals but peasants in their natural country surroundings appealed to *Jean François Millet* (1814-1875). Years of deprivation made his art somber. He did not habitually see the sunny side of life, and often seems to have remembered as a text God's awful curse to Adam: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. . . . In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." He entered as intimately into the personalities of the hard-working peasants as Corot had entered into the mysteries of nature, and knew so well how to combine his farmers and laboring men with the stretches of landscape about Barbizon that he deserves a place by the side of Corot. Visions of beauty that came to the latter passed him by unnoticed. Often his subjects are ugly, but he



### FIRST STEPS

After the pastel by Millet

[illegible]

always surrounded them with the charm which is born of sympathy and of intimate knowledge.

Less true, and consequently less forceful, are the peasant pictures of *Jules Breton* (1827—). He, too, is a fine painter, but he seems unable to penetrate below the surface. His peasants are of the kind which one popularly accepts as inhabiting the country. They are illustrations of conventional ideas, but they lack the spontaneous pathos of the work of Millet.

With *Édouard Manet* (1833–1883) begins an entirely new movement of art, the tenets of which are summed up by Gensel as follows: "Things should be represented not as experience teaches us they are but as they appear to the eye of the painter. All colors in nature are bright; even the shadows are not black, for they are only of lower tints. Space illusions are produced by delicately graded tones, since the air which intervenes between the spectator and a certain object changes the intensity of a color. Things should be painted where they are; landscapes, therefore, should be painted out of doors exclusively. Life is picturesque."

When Manet exhibited his first canvases painted in accordance with this creed people stood aghast. Their eyes were offended by the unaccustomed brightness of tones, by the absence of deep shadows, and by the attention bestowed on the effects of light to the exclusion of many other qualities which they had heretofore admired.

The adherents of this style of painting have been reviled as no painters have ever been before. But with the fervor of martyrs they have persevered, and certainly have taught that air and light deserve to be painted just as much as men, beasts, and scenery. The mistake which many Impressionists have made is that they believed air and light were the only worthy subjects. In consequence they have been tempted to try experiments which have been inartistic and pedantic. The greatest of them, however, have achieved notable success with their new technique; and over all towers *Claude Monet* (1840—), who still astonishes all the world with his beautiful landscapes. The subject counts for little, since air and light ennoble everything.



He delights in catching the various moods of the hours of the day, often rendering the same subjects as they appear to him in the morning, at noon, and when the shadows begin to lengthen. There is an atmosphere in his pictures which is entirely due to the combination of colors, and has nothing to do with the objects to which these colors happen to be attached. However light and fleeting the shadow may be that darkens a certain spot, Monet catches it. His eye is quick, sensitive, and wonderfully accurate. His color is very gay, and to enjoy his work one must be familiar with it. A single Monet in a gallery of other masters is a distressing discord.

While Monet paints landscapes, *Edgar Degas* (1834—), by means of the new technique, puts nude women on canvas with uncompromising accuracy. He sees only their form; their soul life does not interest him, for he cannot see it with his physical eye, and his soul seems to have been created blind. The same, unfortunately, should be said of many modern men.

Practically all subsequent artists have learned much from the technique of the Impressionists,

however varied may be their interest in the spheres of life whence they draw their inspiration.

*Jules Bastien-Lepage* (1848–1884) painted peasant pictures à la Millet, but with the new technique; *Léon L'hermitte* (1844—) did much the same, while *Pascal Adolphe Dagnan-Bouveret* (1852—), beginning with genre scenes, is the only one of all the men who are more or less closely identified with Impressionism, who developed into a great painter of religious subjects.

*Giovanni Boldini* (1844—), an Italian living in Paris, is one of the most charming portrait painters of high life, and *Jean François Raffaëli* (1850—) one of the most spirited portrayers of views of Paris and of cosmopolitan types.

All these men and many more have boldly applied what is best in Impressionism to their own art, and have taken good care not to offend the public taste with the excesses which the Impressionists themselves have often committed.

With few exceptions the trend of French art in the nineteenth century kept step with the rapidly developing accuracy of human vision.





# THE END OF LABOR

After the painting by Jules Breton

[illegible]

But people do not always wish to see; sometimes they want, or at least should want, to dream. In *Pierre Puvis de Chavannes* (1824-1898) they have an artist whose work satisfies this need. In viewing his pictures one receives the same impressions of a divinely pure and blessed world which the sacred pictures of the great Italians used to produce. In the hurry of a busy life Chavannes causes one to stop awhile and dream and feel. He has achieved this with the noble simplicity of his conceptions, and technically with the long sweeping lines and light colors which soothe the eye. Most of his pictures are symbolic, but they are never frostily allegoric like the pictures of the later Classicists. They are readily understood and need no learned commentary.

*Gustave Moreau* (1826-1898) worked not unlike Puvis de Chavannes, but he lacked his wholesomeness. Chavannes takes one to the Elysian Fields, Moreau to the Mountain of Venus. *Jean Charles Cazin* (1841-1901), on the other hand, surrounded actual landscapes with melancholy charm, and not rarely introduced

figures which were suggestive of sadness. *Eugène Carrière* (1849—) and *Edmond Aman-Jean* (1856—) drew a veil over actuality, thus offering plenty of food for speculative contemplation. *Adolph Monticelli* (1824–1886) was a dreamy and tender successor of Diaz of the Barbizon days, while *Paul Albert Besnard* (1849—) drew very one-sided but singularly impressive conclusions from the movement of the Impressionists. Besnard has been called a luminist. Past master of the art of color, he has solved some of the most mysteriously beautiful problems of light, such as the interchange of the rays of the moon with those of a street lamp. His interiors are full of delightful effects of light, and his portraits of women suggestive of a fairy world.

To pass in review, even briefly, the achievements of the French painters in the nineteenth century means coming in contact with every branch of modern art. In every movement a Frenchman of genius was the leader. Perfection of technique seemed to be born with them. It is natural, therefore, that all nations should have

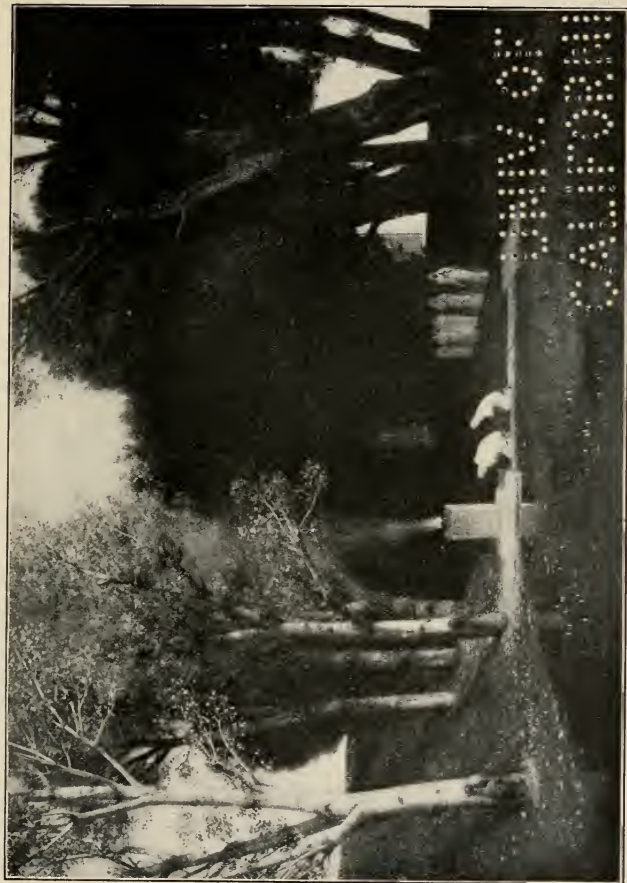
come to them to learn. Unfortunately, however, many painters have left them impressed only with their technical versatility, so that people at large have not rarely considered French art to be an unscrupulous exercise of manual dexterity. If in recent years the French influence has been less distinctly felt, for instance, in America, this is due to the growth of American art, which is able to stand on her own feet, and not to any diminution of the worth of French painting.

## CHAPTER II

### GERMAN PAINTING

If it is generally true that one fails to understand the art of a people unless one readily enters into its spirit, this is conspicuously so with modern German art. American standards are almost exclusively French. We sympathize with the aims of French artists, and rank a picture by the evidence which it gives of endeavors along these lines. We even persist in doing so, notwithstanding we have learned that the meager means at the disposal of a painter prevent him from doing justice to more than one point of view. This realization should make us charitable, and eager to study the works of those whose aims are different from our own. To study them is the more necessary since our own point of view becomes more clearly defined when it is compared with that of other people.

Subject and technique are the two notable factors in a picture. The artist may place the



ARNOLD BÖCKLIN  
The Sacred Grove





emphasis on both alike, or on one to the detriment of the other. Broad classifications are not always helpful, but in the case of most German artists of the nineteenth century it may be said that, in contrast to their French contemporaries, they were concerned with *what* they should paint and not *how* they should paint it, the latter question interesting them only in so far as it is impossible to do anything without a certain amount of technique. "A painter should know how to paint," King Louis of Bavaria exclaimed in disgust when his protégé, Cornelius, too glaringly disregarded the *how* of his art.

As time advanced greater emphasis was naturally placed, even in Germany, on the perfection of the technical side of painting; but the strong undercurrent of the importance of a worthy subject did not disappear. There may, of course, be an honest difference of opinion as to what constitutes a worthy subject, and in the lighter vein of art the character of the people to whom it is meant to appeal must be considered.

To disapprove of the German technique and to condemn the German subject because the

American mind finds no satisfaction in it, is obviously unjust. Many Americans have been bored by *Punch* because their sense of humor demanded other jokes and sallies than the English paper contained, and have, after an acquaintance with the English people, learned to appreciate as funny what formerly they called silly and meaningless. With many people the pleasure in little things is as keen as the delight in great things is with others; and the appeal to the former is fully as legitimate as that to the latter. To disapprove of the endeavors of an artist who is pleased with little things simply because we ourselves need more powerful ideas to arouse our emotions, is unjust.

The German people as a whole, especially of a generation ago, had the gift of ennobling with proper sentiment the small conditions under which they lived. Some of their great favorites were artists who understood this faculty. "I know," said Ludwig Richter, "what art is and what are her demands. I delight in her many gradations and directions, I know her errors and dangerous side tracks, and I am happy and

content with the little corner where my place is ordained to be." Shall we condemn the work of such a man because he has no message for us, and sneer at the thousands of people who have understood him?

A more broad-minded attitude toward Richter, and the many men who have worked like him, than is customary to-day will dispose of much unjust criticism of German art.

Characteristic of another class of artists who are much misunderstood are Anselm Feuerbach and Friedrich Overbeck. The former wrote, after a visit to Florence, these words: "My future path stood before me clearly. I seemed thus far to have painted only with my hands. Suddenly I had come to be the possessor also of a living soul." And Overbeck said, "My art is like a harp on which I desire at all times to sound psalms in the honor of God." Different as these two men were, the one from the other, they were alike in their belief that a great artist is not only a technician but also, and above everything else, a noble man. The justice of their position will not be denied, and it will be granted that if we call neither of

them masters of painting because they were lacking in skill, fairness demands that we do not rank them lower than those of our own artists who have technical skill but fail to give indications of nobility of conception.

In recent years a school of open-air (*plein air*) painters has risen in Germany,— the so-called Impressionists, or, as they are better known, Secessionists, because since 1883 they have withdrawn from participation in official exhibitions. None of their works, unfortunately, were seen in St. Louis in 1904 because of the antagonistic attitude of the government. Their point of view is very much akin to that prevalent in America, so that an exhibition of their paintings would have done much to increase the American estimate of German art.

The classic enthusiasm kindled among German artists in the eighteenth century by Carstens and Mengs continued in the early nineteenth century with Genelli, Preller, and Rottmann, all of whom sought inspiration in the study of the antique.

*Genelli* (1798–1868) was the only one of this trio who was not interested in landscapes. His



OTTO MODERSOHN  
On the Moor

[illegible]



forte was the human figure, especially in motion. In the best works by *Preller* (1804-1878) the figures are only insignificant parts of the picture. Often they are disturbing, for Preller did not know how to make them necessary to his compositions. He was a man of vivid imagination, who in his mind peopled the rocks and coasts which he studied on a journey to Naples, and drew from them his famous illustrations to the *Odyssey*. *Rottmann* (1797-1850) was the greatest of the heroic landscapists, but he also suffered at times from the erroneous notion that a landscape without figures cannot arouse in the spectator proper emotions. Without being familiar with the much later school of open-air artists, he delighted in phases of nature which are characteristic of them, — sunsets, storms, and moonlight. With him they were means of appealing to the emotions, owing to the things which they suggested, — the grandeur of nature and the mystery of life. The open-air painters resort to them because of the studies in light and shade which they enable them to make, and the resulting color schemes.

In all their works the German Classicists are clearly distinguished from their contemporary Frenchmen known by the same name. Both received their inspiration from the antique, but while the Germans endeavored to sink themselves into the spirit of antiquity, the Frenchmen learned from ancient art their fine technique. With them it was the *how*, with the Germans the *what*, that mattered most.

There is a strong similarity of aim between the German Classicists and those other Germans who did not go quite so far back for their inspiration, but sought it in the Middle Ages. These men are known as Romanticists, and since their leaders were deeply religious men, most of them Roman Catholics who loved to tell the story of Christ, they are also called Nazarenes.

The best representative of the Nazarenes was *Overbeck* (1789–1869) who lived for years together with a few friends in the recently abandoned monastery of San Isidore near Rome. He found his masters in the great men of the early Italian Renaissance, being especially fond of Signorelli and Masaccio. Raphael was not appreciated by

the Nazarenes, for in his works they detected signs of the uninspired skilled technician, whom they were wont to call an artisan rather than an artist. Their attitude in this respect is pardonable, for they had to combat the traditional art tendencies which were based on skill alone.

In the pursuit of their studies it was natural that Overbeck and his friends should endeavor to revive the technique of their early predecessors and begin to paint again *al fresco*. The man who did most to introduce this technique into Germany was *Cornelius* (1783–1867), who, starting as a Classicist, had been drawn into the circle of Overbeck, and later, as director of the academies in Düsseldorf and still later in Munich, had made himself a power in his native land.

Cornelius was a great man but not a great painter. Fighting against those who believed skill to be the alpha and omega of art, he went to the other extreme and may be said to have actually neglected it. Moreover, he did not know how to confine himself to those subjects which can properly be treated in painting, and consequently failed in almost all of his undertakings. His influence,

however, as the exponent of the importance of matter versus manner was felt in Germany for many decades, and has not yet entirely disappeared.

That neither Overbeck nor Cornelius nor any of their friends and followers developed a color scheme as bright and pleasing as that of the French Romanticists is quite natural, for the only reason why the latter had turned to the study of an ideal past was that its subjects suggested gay colors. Nor was a great step in advance along these lines to be taken by the immediate followers of the Nazarenes.

The failure of Cornelius made the success of his pupil, *Wilhelm von Kaulbach* (1805-1847), appear to great advantage. This man was pre-eminently an executing genius, but he lacked the deep spirituality of the other great Nazarenes. He composed well and worked with ease. His drawing was exquisite and his coloring pleasing, although, judged by standards of later colorists, far from perfect.

The greatest influence on the development of German art was exerted by the last of the Nazarenes, *Wilhelm von Schadow* (1789-1862), who



A HALT IN THE OASIS

After the painting by Schreyer





succeeded Cornelius as director of the academy in Düsseldorf. Himself a man of many and noble ideas, he conceived his duty as teacher to be to give to his pupils a sound foundation in technique, trusting that if they had this they would become great artists, provided they had the proper personality. Without it he knew that not even the most conspicuous natural gifts would make them achieve successes. Schadow never lost his faith in the essential requirement for a great artist, — a noble character, — but he wisely distinguished between the studio of an artist and an art school. In the latter emphasis should be placed on the *how*; in the former the *what* should receive at least equal consideration.

To-day, after generations of remarkable growth everywhere, the works of the Düsseldorf school, which have since been improved upon in most particulars, are no longer held to be masterpieces. The importance of Düsseldorf, however, both for Germany and America, — for many of the earlier Americans studied there rather than in France, — is so firmly established that no amount of ingratitude can shake it.



Three classes of pictures were especially cultivated in Düsseldorf, — landscapes, genre pieces, and historico-romantic incidents. *Andreas Achenbach* (1815—) and *Lessing* (1808–1880) were the best landscape painters, the latter excelling also in historic pictures, notably in a series of incidents from the life of Huss. The most popular genre painter was *Knaus*. These three men and their many friends and followers were characterized by seriousness of purpose, faithfulness of execution, and considerable skill. The problems, however, which had already begun to stir France—color, and light and shade, and the intimate relationship between the artist and the life which he portrays — were unknown to them, except possibly *Adolph Schreyer* (1828–1899). He was born in Frankfort, but for all practical purposes might be classed with the later French Romanticists. He is best known for his spirited pictures of horsemen, in which is shown the underlying keynote of all his work, — wonderful daring.

The same was true of the rival schools in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Vienna. Everywhere the purpose was good and the skill more

or less adequate, but the great causes in the service of which later artists placed their endeavors had not yet appeared. *Blechen* (1798–1840) in Berlin was perhaps an exception, for he seems to have had a natural sense for the values of colors. He alone, for instance, at that early date, conceived as artistically beautiful the motive of thin blue smoke escaping from a factory chimney into the soft air of evening.

Early in the forties a remarkable change took place. The eyes of the people were opened to the charm of color after they—the countrymen of Holbein—had been insensible to it for centuries. In 1842, when two Belgian painters, Gallait and de Bièfve, made their appearance in Germany, the whole country went wild over them. What the Germans most admired in them was their realism in composition and their unrestricted use of pronounced colors. That their realism, in fact, was more theatrical than true, and their coloring void of the more delicate shadings, did not disturb their admirers; for from the technical point of view the Germans had seen nothing equally perfect. The result was

that art received a new impetus. Especially in Munich the new ideas were firmly established, with *Piloty* (1826–1886) as the pioneer of the movement. But Piloty, as was natural with a man who sought to accomplish a definite end with a new technique, did not avoid showing his intentions, which gave to his pictures the appearance of artificiality. Every detail was carefully worked out, and the unity of the whole consequently neglected. The figures were posed for effect, just as they are on the stage, and the necessary truth of actual occurrences was forgotten. The word “theatrical” properly describes many of the pictures of the Piloty school.

*Makart* (1840–1884) was the most gifted pupil of Piloty. Surrounded with wealth and luxury, and worshiped almost like a god by his contemporaries, he poured forth with almost incredible velocity the most sensuously beautiful symphonies of color that had ever issued from the brush of an artist. For values in the modern sense of the word he had no eye. The slow and thoughtful art of Whistler he would not have understood. His colors were many and rich; they were meant to



ADOLF VON MENZEL  
The Round Table at Sanssouci

THE  
LIBRARY  
OF THE  
MUSEUM OF  
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY  
AT  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

win admiration by storm, and had no message for those who love to think and dream over a picture. Makart died a young man, rushing through life, a meteor on the art heaven of Germany. And like his life was his art. "Much he had learned from Titian," says Professor Gensel, "and more perhaps from Veronese, but he lacked the essential force and wholesomeness of either of these men."

It is impossible to study the development of painting in the nineteenth century in Germany without feeling convinced that at some time men would arise to combine the *what* of the Classicists and Romanticists with the *how* of the Düsseldorf and Munich schools. These men actually have arisen in the great quartet, properly called the German Individualists, — Böcklin, Feuerbach, Klinger, and Marées. The only thing that binds these men together is their general attitude toward art and the allowances which they make to individual preferences. They hated Impressionism, — "transcribing nature as you pass along," — and were equally convinced with Carstens that "art is a speech of emotions. Where expression in

words fails, art begins." And they would also have subscribed to the definition of art as "nature seen through a temperament," provided nature were made to include both the visible and the invisible. In their selection and interpretation of subjects and in their mode of execution they were strangely unlike.

*Feuerbach* (1829-1880) preferred the antique. His pictures of ancient people, however, are the result of an emotional rather than of an intellectual study. His masterpiece is a picture of Iphigenia seated not far from the sea, "her yearning soul in search of Greece and home." This picture is good because the artist has put his whole soul into it, and because the soberness of his style is in perfect accord with the simplicity of his subject.

Feuerbach was somewhat affected with *Weltschmerz*, a painful yearning for things unknown. It showed in all his work and introduced an unreal element into his pictures, unless his subjects lent themselves to such an interpretation, as for instance Iphigenia. His coloring, never gay, grew thinner and gloomier as years advanced, and he



failed to gain the approval of the people. He became discouraged, for he knew that his compositions were of greater worth than those of the Munich colorists which yet were greeted everywhere with bursts of admiration.

Unlike Feuerbach, who died young, *Böcklin* (1827-1901) lived to see his art crowned with material success. Ridiculed at first, he finally received indiscriminate praise from high and low. He may be likened to a teller of fairy tales. His subjects were not based on facts, and therefore could not be painted as such.

To claim Böcklin as antique in spirit may at first seem to be absurd. His fanciful coloring, his unreal figures, his heavy forms, all seem to prove him the most modern of the moderns. And yet, if one goes deeper and sees how for him every tree had its spirit of life, how the breakers of the sea suggested a woman playing her harp, and how the silence of the woods at eventide was translated by him into a strange figure on a strange animal making its way alone through the forest, one realizes that here one has something akin to that Greek spirit which peopled the trees and

rivers and glens with nymphs and demigods, and could not think of nature apart from such creations of fancy.

Böcklin was a careful and painstaking painter. He had his fairy tales well thought out before he attempted to paint them. Asked what was the most difficult part of his art, he replied, "Not to lose pleasure in painting." He knew the importance of technique, without which he could not express himself, but he firmly believed that even the best technique is of no account if the artist has no clearly defined ideas ready for expression.

Delicate eyes are often offended by his harsh color schemes, in which pronounced blues and greens predominate, while truth to the appearances of things is all but unknown. To the objector who exclaims, "Who ever saw such trees?" Böcklin would have answered, "I! I saw them in a vision"; and he might have added, "Come with me to my *Isle of the Blessed*, and you, too, will see them."

*Max Klinger* (1857—), the youngest of the great Individualists, is not unlike Böcklin in some of his works. But he is less consistent



MAX LIEBERMANN  
The Flax Spinners



and more versatile. While Böcklin has visions, Klinger has hallucinations. A more gruesome picture than his "Mother and Child" has never been sketched; but it is fascinating. One feels like the old Greek, of whom Plato writes, who, passing the corpses of shipwrecked mariners, was filled with awe and hurried along; but after a few steps was forced to turn back against the will of his nobler self, and, opening wide his eyes, shouted to them angrily, "There, you brutes, see your fill."

Klinger is fond of solving technical problems, but in his larger compositions he is not free from technical defects. Being also a sculptor, he delights in well-defined bodies, and although his modeling is good, he often fails to be convincing. In this respect he is surpassed by *Hans von Marées* (1837-1887), whose figures detach themselves easily from the background and seem to be standing free in space. "They mean nothing," Professor Gensel says, "do not intend to mean anything, and are satisfied with merely being." Their very existence, however, generally nude in simple landscapes, gives expression to the artistic intentions of Marées. He never tried to copy

actual scenes of nature or events from life. That would have been prose; he was a poet.

The pioneer Realist of Germany was *Leibl* (1846-1900), whose maxim seems to have been that creations of fancy cannot be so valuable as transcripts from life, for life properly studied is more interesting than any dreams about it. He was a man of considerable skill within certain limits, which he was wise enough not to transgress. "Figures at rest he can paint," said a rival of him; "but try him on moving figures and you will see his inferior skill." But Leibl continued to paint quiet figures and to achieve success with them. He is a Realist in the best sense of the word, not copying every detail as he saw it, but centering his attention on what should give the spectator the impression of the original.

A greater man than Leibl was *Menzel* (1815-1904), of whom it has been said that he tried to do only what he could do, and that he could do everything. He was a man of astonishing versatility, who achieved success in almost every branch of drawing and painting. He had an eye to details and built his pictures around those which were



important. The accuracy of his apperceptions was equaled only by that of his brush, while both stood unrivaled. His early works on the life of Frederick the Great were characterized by remarkable historical fidelity coupled with lifelikeness in the figures, and were painted in a style that seemed to foreshadow the technique of the later illusionists. As he grew older his coloring became richer, and he solved many interesting problems of light and shade years before similar problems began to interest the French Impressionists, with an occasional excursion into other fields. One of his madonna pictures has gained deserved popularity. Toward the end his works were often sketchy in contrast to the precision of his earlier creations, but even in these late pictures he showed that he had not lost the power of observing essentials.

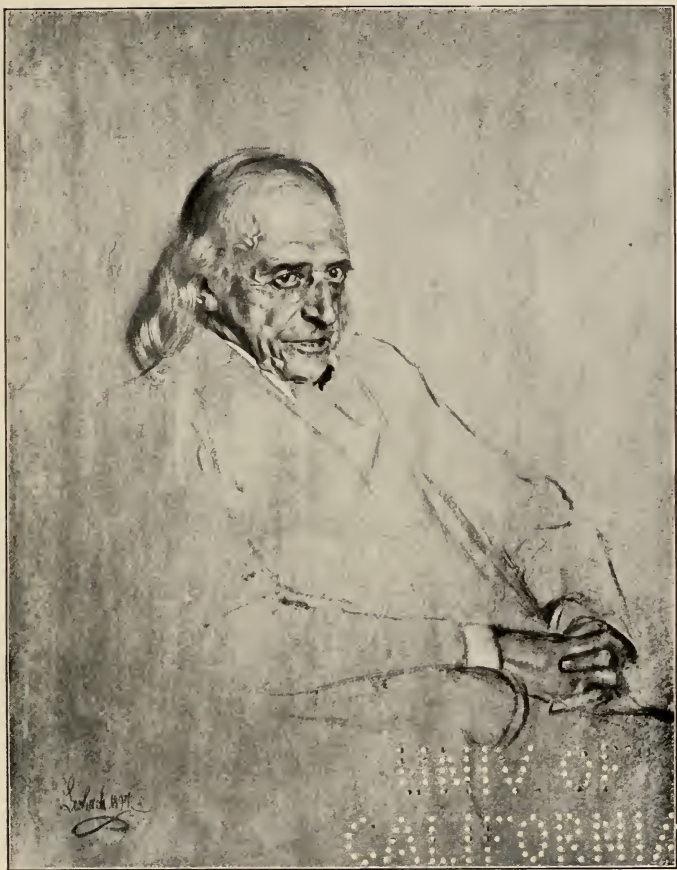
Interest in everything was a notable factor of his character. Everywhere he found desirable subjects for his compositions, but while his German admirers maintain that his selections were invariably wise, less biased observers believe that he was not always successful. His great picture



of the Factory Forge, for instance, gave him the opportunity of bringing order out of a seemingly hopeless chaos and proving himself a technician second to none, but gave his opponents likewise the chance of pointing to the undesirability of permitting one's delight in technical difficulties to determine one's choice of a subject.

Equally as great as Menzel, but only in a narrowly circumscribed field, *Franz von Lenbach* (1836-1904) vied with him in popular favor. He not only confined himself to portraiture but was even within this single branch of art restricted to a certain mode of representation, painting only the heads and treating everything else as unimportant accessories. In his younger years his color rivaled that of the great Venetians; later, however, he painted only in browns. His women still retained gayer colors, but they are not his masterpieces, although some of them, and especially his pictures of children, are exceedingly charming. His men have made his reputation, and with them he will live.

Lenbach is a psychologist. He read character and painted it, without doing it, however, any



FRANZ VON LENBACH  
Portrait of Mommsen

THE NEW

AMERICAN

impersonal justice. In his pictures one does not see Bismarck or Moltke or Liszt, but Lenbach's Bismarck and Lenbach's Moltke and Lenbach's Liszt. His point of view, however, is always interesting, so that his pictures are gainers rather than losers. There may be better painters than he, and more brilliant men, but there are none who equal him in the power of drawing ineffaceable images of well-known personages. If one has seen a portrait by Lenbach, one cannot henceforth think of that man in any other way. And this, it will be remembered, is the same praise that was bestowed in antiquity on the Olympian Zeus by Pheidias.

Unlike Lenbach, *Friedrich August von Kaulbach* (1850—) is best known for his portraits of women. He seems to worship at the shrine of womanly beauty, and has the power of convincing the spectator that this beauty is one of the best and noblest forces in the world.

The remaining Realists of note differ each from the other in everything except their desire to paint real things so that they shall seem to be real. *Anton von Werner* (1843—) selects his

subjects from the modern history of Prussia, *Franz Defregger* (1835—) delights in the peasant life of the Tyrol, *Eduard von Gebhardt* (1838—) reconstructs scenes from the Bible and fills them with deep feeling, while *Munkácsy* (1846–1900), whose real name was Michael Lieb, selected as his subjects whatever gave him the chance of displaying his dramatic pathos and remarkable power as a colorist.

Many of the so-called Realists had been actively engaged in solving problems of color and light and shade, so that it is not surprising that also in Germany men should have drawn the natural inferences which the French painters of open air had drawn before them, and should have started the school of the so-called Impressionists, or, as they are known in Germany, Secessionists. *Max Liebermann* (1849—) may be said to be the father of the movement. At present the list of the Secessionists includes the names of many excellent men. There is *Walter Leistikow* (1865–1908), who, with unparalleled grandeur, has transcribed the strong and singularly impressive scenery of the country around Berlin, where more than

anywhere else the help which man can render to nature is apparent; for without it Berlin would be situated in a desert instead of being able to boast of one of the loveliest surroundings of any large city. In the selection of subjects his very opposite, *Franz Skarbina* (1849—), rivals the best of the modern luminists in rendering mysterious effects of light. In his "View from the Eiffel Tower" the incredibly beautiful effect of the World's Fair at night, with the myriad of electric lights forming a sea of prickling incandescence, is placed before the spectator. In the distance the Trocadéro reaches up to the dark dome of heaven, and in the foreground the shadowy figure of a young girl appears, who is seemingly oblivious to the glorious feast to the eyes spread before her. And then there is *Franz Stuck* (1863—), with his often gruesome and fantastic pictures, and the wholesome, lovable *Hans Thoma* (1839—), who has been called the most German of German artists. Technically he is possibly the weakest of all the well-known Secessionists, but he has the gift of ennobling his art as few men can. His range of subjects is large,

from fairy tales to scenes taken directly from the life of the people; and over everything there hovers the charm of nobility. It has been said of Praxiteles that he never put his chisel to the block but that the little god of love was peeping over his shoulder. Thoma, it would seem, has an equally faithful companion in the guardian angel of the German race. *Fritz von Uhde* (1848—), to mention only one more of this group of men, is best known for his religious pictures. He paints peasants as they are to-day and places Christ among them. By bringing the person of Christ thus close to us, he succeeds in giving to his pictures at the same time spirituality and reality, such as are unknown in earlier paintings.

Slightly outside the more intimate circle of the Secessionists a great many men have learned the valuable lessons which this movement had to teach, and have thus begun to bridge the chasm between the two schools. *Arthur Kampf* of Berlin (1864—) has won success largely with his decorative paintings, and *Carl Marr* (1858—), an American who has settled in Munich, is distinguished for his delicate madonnas.





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FRITZ VON UHDE  
Christ Teaching

[illegible][illegible]

Another characteristic of the Secessionists is a distinct love for their immediate surroundings; or, to be more precise, this interest in scenes at home arose almost simultaneously with the break that occurred between the adherents of the old style of painting and the young enthusiasts. Formerly artists had often failed to see the beauty of the distinctly German landscape, and at best had rendered what was grand in her mountain regions. But now they began to feel the charm also of the lowlands. They discovered, in fact, that nature spoke her infinite message everywhere. Like Corot and his friends at Barbizon, several German artists have withdrawn from the hurry of city life and have established colonies in country surroundings. The best known of these colonies is that at Worpswede near Bremen, where such men as *Mackensen* (1866 —), *Modersohn* (1865 —), and *Hans am Ende* are the leaders.

The richness of modern German art is one of the pleasantest surprises for the student. Unsheltered by the favor of the court, for Emperor William leans more toward the conventional, the literal, side of painting, artists everywhere have

placed their strength at the service of all worthy new ideas, and by their genius have advanced not a few of them. In short, the art of painting in Germany has never been in such good hands as it is to-day.

## CHAPTER III

### BRITISH PAINTING

Standing somewhat outside the whirlpool of European political history, and by geographical position compelled to go her own way, Great Britain used to hold a unique place in the field of art. She relied almost exclusively on foreign talent down to the middle of the eighteenth century, but showered with magnificent honors those great artists who came to her. When finally, with the advent of Reynolds and Gainsborough, she rose to a place of independence, she followed no contemporary's lead, but proved herself an exclusive aristocrat in most things. France, with her versatility, was democratic; Germany, with her sentiment, was no less so; but England, with her poise, was preëminently the land where refinement reigned not as an accident but as a prerequisite of art. To walk through a gallery of early English pictures is like visiting with high nobility. Nobility is not

always cold; it has its emotions just as other people have them, but it shows them less. One must know it well if one wants to understand it. He enjoys Reynolds and Gainsborough best who is able to grasp their essentially aristocratic preferences.

Another point of difference between Great Britain and the Continent was that she was hardly touched by the movement of the Classicists. Her art continued, without a break, the traditions of the artists of the seventeenth century, most especially those of men who, like Van Dyck and Sir Peter Lely, had long lived in the country, and whose courtly grace was the starting point of the new national art.

British art has never seen a revolution which aimed to dethrone respected ideals for the sake of inaugurating an age of freedom. Whatever disturbances she has experienced were occasioned by those who preferred to make new ideals paramount. Coarseness has been unknown to her. Her painters either have not known or have passed in silence the gamut of powerful passions which must be fought by those who make

their way through life unsheltered by worthy traditions.

Many of her painters, moreover, have been thinkers, preachers, poets, believing in the dignity of their art as an elevating, instructive, and guiding force, and have naturally refrained from making of it a tool for the gratification of the senses.

British artists, of course, have also painted some pictures which do not agree with this characterization, but in so far as they have done so, they are not distinctly British.

The history of British painting is brief, covering only about one hundred and fifty years, but it can, nevertheless, be divided into several periods. The first is the age of Reynolds and Gainsborough and their immediate successors, lasting to about the second decade of the nineteenth century. The second is a period of stagnant conventionalism covering only about twenty years; this was rudely disturbed by Mr. Ruskin, and was quickly superseded by the third period, which was dominated by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This brotherhood also was of short



duration, although its influence lasted through a generation, and in some degree is felt even to-day. The fourth period is less easily defined. One may perhaps call it one of individual preferences, since various ideals are followed by the several men. A fifth period will doubtless appear more clearly to future art historians as having had its origin in the latter years of the nineteenth century, and having emanated from the Scotch school. Here figure pieces are painted as everywhere in Great Britain, but landscapes are raised to unwonted predominance.

#### PORTRAIT PAINTERS

Reynolds and Gainsborough were not the first Britishers of importance, for they were preceded by *William Hogarth* (1697-1764). This man was a satirist whose pictures were often meant to flay existing evils, but they did it under the guise of humorous anecdotes. This satirical humor made Hogarth popular, so popular, indeed, that engravings of his paintings are known everywhere. Though greatly interested in his subjects, people have overlooked the technical beauties of his

work and have been apt to rank him far below his real worth as a painter. The careful observer finds in his pictures bits of exquisite color and a remarkably delicate touch. His compositions are magnificently grouped, and not rarely enriched with a very fine play of light and shade. He also painted portraits, showing a fine artistic gift in this line of work, although he did not approach the marvelous successes of Reynolds or Gainsborough.

*Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1723-1792) is generally regarded as the greatest English painter. His drawing is exquisite, his coloring very rich and warm, alluring, and suggestive of a happy, luxurious state of well-being. Before his pictures one almost breathes the scented atmosphere of high society. It is, however, a worthy society; for his people are Englishmen of the type who have done most for the advancement of humanity. He painted good likenesses, and yet for us there is such a strong generic resemblance in all his works that it is easier to recognize in them the conceptions of Reynolds than the individuality of his sitters.

He was elected president of the Academy when still a young man, forty-five years of age, and remained to the end of his life the leader and backbone of the official school of painting. He was also an author, and knew how to enforce his artistic convictions with vigorous speech.

Unlike Reynolds, *Thomas Gainsborough* (1727-1788) preserved through life a position of independence. The stamp of officialism was never placed on his work; and not rarely did he paint with the avowed purpose of contravening a dictum of the Royal Academy. His famous "Blue Boy" owes its origin to his desire of showing that blue could be made the leading color of a composition. In the execution of this picture, however, blue is in reality a very subordinate color, since the texture of the cloth, which the spectator understands to be blue, shimmers in a variety of hues under the peculiar light which is shed about the figure.

Quoting often a famous expression of Kneller to the effect that pictures are not made to be smelled at, Gainsborough introduced a feathery, volatile application of color which gives to his



THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

The Blue Boy

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compositions both distinction and suggestiveness. It also disguises a somewhat uncertain touch of drawing, — uncertain, however, only in the sense in which the outlines of a cloud are uncertain, because human eyes are rarely quick enough to catch them distinctly.

He painted landscapes comparatively rarely, but here also he showed himself a master. Lest this additional accomplishment of his be construed into a claim to superiority over Reynolds, it must be remembered that this latter artist was his undoubted superior as a portrayer of children.

“Did these two masters equal the greatest portrait painters of earlier centuries?” Professor Gensel asks and significantly replies that this question may well remain an open one. “The fact is,” he adds, “that we experience before their pictures that pleasure which leaves no room for further desires. Reynolds’ ‘Nelly O’Brien,’ with her bewitching smile and her mystery due to the shadow which is thrown by her hat, impresses us as do the most beautiful women by Rembrandt; and over Gainsborough’s ‘Perdita’ and ‘Mrs.

Siddons' there hovers such indescribable grace and grandeur that we desire to do them homage as though they were alive."

No one of the other painters of the first period was quite the equal of Reynolds or Gainsborough, although several approached them in the perfection of one point or another. *George Romney* was a master of youthful grace and mature womanhood. *Thomas Lawrence* (1769-1830), who made a name for himself when a mere boy, was often superficial, but at his best revealed a thoroughly refined taste and great technical perfection; while the Scotchman, *Henry Raeburn* (1756-1823), was distinguished by his very successful light and shade.

#### LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

*Richard Wilson* (1713-1782), a contemporary of Gainsborough, is the first English landscape painter of consequence. Like Claude Lorrain and Poussin, he was enthralled by heroic idealism; and unlike Gainsborough, he saw even his native land through the borrowed spectacles of foreign grandeur. Gainsborough used no



spectacles, but he, too, was less true than imaginative, and drew more frequently on his recollections than on nature herself.

The first man to put himself in intimate touch with nature was *John Crome* (1769–1821), — called Old Crome to distinguish him from his son, John Bernay Crome. Old Crome founded the so-called Norwich school. Admiring the Dutch landscapists, he endeavored to equal their close relationship with nature, and he succeeded. His pictures possess what the Germans call *Stimmung*; they put the spectator in a very definite mood. His subjects are often commonplace and uninteresting, but his love of nature has enabled him to reproduce faithfully her charm or her sadness, whatever his motif happened to be. His coloring was usually of a soft, rich brownish tone.

It is this brown that distinguishes him most convincingly, even for the novice, from his still greater contemporary, *John Constable* (1776–1837), who was the first to appreciate that green and not brown is the predominant tone of nature. He also dared to paint what the most frequently

prevailing weather of England made him see constantly, — gloomy days with water-charged clouds. Many critics have not liked these pictures, since they lack the grandeur of a storm or the idyllic loveliness of sunny climes. "Bring me my umbrella," a contemporary of Constable is quoted as saying; "I want to look at Constable's landscapes." But whether we like them or not, they are true; and to this extent the artist deserves our admiration. He certainly practiced and taught that nothing is so important for a landscape painter as the immediate study of nature. Possibly he is open to the charge that he was unmindful of another important principle, namely that an artist should make selections, and not paint everything he sees.

Together with his follower, *David Cox* (1783–1859), of Birmingham, Constable exerted a powerful influence not only on the landscape painters of Great Britain but also on those of the Continent. It is often said that even the Frenchmen received from him their first introduction to the intimate landscape, — *le paysage intime*.

Outside any particular sphere of influence, *Joseph Mallord William Turner* (1775-1851), a unique personality, climbed the ladder of fame. Generally we admire and understand an artist better when we know something of his life and his aspirations. Even his faults are apt to set off in strong relief some virtues which seem to be the guiding stars of his career. Not so with Turner; the deeper we delve into the recesses of his life the more disgusted we grow. A mean, dirty (physically so), deceitful, selfish, grasping miser, an ungenerous acquaintance, a lying friend; he had only one idea, and that was to be one day the painter of England whom every one should admire. It is a marvel where he hid during his long life the great soul that speaks in his works. Where did he dream those wonderful dreams that even to-day appeal to young and old with singular force? Pick his pictures to pieces, enlarge on their unreality, ridicule their grotesqueness; yet before the smile has left your lips you, too, have been drawn into the magic circle of Turner's beautiful unrealities. Or are they perhaps not unrealities?

Is the world of sight at fault? Do our senses lie to us, and has Turner given mortal shapes to immortal, invisible realities?

His paintings have been divided into several classes. Under the influence of earlier painters he at first painted marines, and was somewhat hard in drawing and monotonous in color. Afterwards he composed heroic landscapes, gradually making allowances for the effect of air, and using more natural tones; and then he suddenly burst forth with his symphonies of light, his color pyrotechnics, when he dared to emblaze his canvas with gold and scarlet, two colors never seen before in any British picture. His final step was in the direction of the Impressionists, dissolving the outlines of everything and retaining only a certain tone of color or of light. In these last pictures he often attained to a mysteriously magic force in which abstract ideas, such as rapidity, gained the upper hand over their concrete manifestations, as, for instance, in his picture of a railroad train rushing through a driving rain storm.

## PAINTERS OF GENRE AND OF ANIMALS

In a lighter vein *David Wilkie* (1785–1841), during the lifetime of Turner, introduced his compatriots to peaceful genre pictures, so that in this line also Great Britain took the first step, although the continentals were quick to follow her lead. Wilkie was a man of amiable temper, — a pleasant reciter with whose work one may well while away a pleasant hour. Subjects interested him far more than technique, so that he is readily surpassed in this latter respect by *George Morland* (1736–1804). Morland possessed the recklessness of the great artist, but unfortunately permitted it to rule also his private life. His debauchery brought his life to an untimely end. If he had possessed moral strength and had lived, he might have become one of the foremost artists of England; for he held complete mastery over color and had a well-developed sense of light and shade. He was, moreover, a good animal painter, and at times equaled the successes of Landseer.

*Sir Edwin Landseer* (1802–1873) is the most famous animal painter of Great Britain. He not

only loved the dumb beasts but also humanized them. This pleased and still pleases the large masses of the people, but it often offends the more serious student of nature. Distinctly human emotions are portrayed in dogs or other animals, and are therefore debased or sentimentalized. Nevertheless Landseer mastered the intricate forms of the animal kingdom more completely than any one else in Great Britain. Lovers of household pets will, therefore, continue to rank him with the great painters. Those, however, who expect more of art than a passing pleasure, and who have experienced sensations akin to those which the greatest of mortals have endeavored to express in art, will be less charitable. At best they will concede Landseer a place with the masters of technique.

#### THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

It is an interesting fact that Landseer stood in his zenith when British art had reached its lowest level,—in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century. It was then that John Ruskin took up his cudgels and began to hammer away



on existing conditions, when he declared that Turner alone towered above the decay, and that all official art ideals were false, insincere, and corrupt. The men at the head of the Royal Academy were pygmies compared with Reynolds and his more immediate followers. *Sir Charles Eastlake* (1793-1865) alone was an exception, but not so much with his paintings, of which there were few, as with his lectures and helpful personality. In view of these facts it will be seen that any radical change was bound to prove a national success. The present, the reformer said, was bad; it was necessary to go back. Back to what? The answer to this was given by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

The artists who formed this brotherhood believed that honesty of workmanship and truth were to be found only in works antedating Raphael. They surrounded the early Renaissance with a halo, partly well deserved and partly founded on their own vivid imagination. They believed in careful and loving workmanship, and declared war on all tendencies to slur over details. Few of them lived up to this ideal very long; for



“you cannot paint thus and make a living” was an observation that forced itself upon them only too soon.

A passionate yearning to return to any period of the past always carries with it a strong imagination; for no period in the history of the world has been so truly beautiful that it is a worthy refuge from the present. It becomes so only if we are forgetful of its defects and deck it with the mystic garlands of our own fancies. The Pre-Raphaelites, consequently, were more or less like the Romanticists. They were of a fantastic turn of mind, and in this respect simply followed *William Blake* (1757–1827), the most fanciful of all the British painters, who, however, is better known for his engravings than for his pictures.

The first artist to espouse the new cause, although he was not a formal member of the brotherhood, was *Ford Madox Brown* (1821–1893). This man broke irrevocably with the immediate past, and strove after “truth of color, of spiritual expression, and of historical character.” He was always forceful, but not always beautiful,—especially in the ensemble of his



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Ecce Ancilla Domini

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colors, because he discarded "the brown sauce which every one had hitherto respected like a binding social law," without being able to replace it with something entirely satisfactory. In contemplating his dramatic energy and sincerity of conception, however, one forgets the acerbity of his color schemes.

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*<sup>1</sup> (1828-1882), *John Everett Millais* (1829-1896), and *William Holman Hunt* (1827—) were the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Looking back to-day to the time when these three men declared war on existing conditions, one wonders what it was that drew together three men of such widely differing tastes. Rossetti was a dreaming, sensuous mystic, Hunt a mere child in the simplicity of his religious faith, and Millais the most one-sided lover of the world of visible and tangible phenomena.

Millais was the first to part company with the Pre-Raphaelites. At first one of the most eager to sink himself in the much-loved perfection of detail, his sober nature soon told him that this

<sup>1</sup> His real name was Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti.

was not the road to success, and since he coveted success he left that road, but carried with him a technique of great perfection. Eventually he became one of the most popular British artists, selecting his subjects with an eye to the taste of the masses, — sentimental or patriotic, — but rendering them with an accurate knowledge of the requirements of a first-class artist. He was versatile, and has left not only well-composed and finely painted figure pieces but also good landscapes.

Hunt began with romantic pictures, but soon chose religious subjects and has continued to do so. His religious fervor reminds one of the German, Overbeck; in his beautiful simplicity of faith, however, he is unique. His technique is good, but his color is rarely without blemish, as is natural with a man who is filled with the divine meaning of his subjects.

The most characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelites was Rossetti, who introduced into art an almost uncanny mixture of mysticism and sensuousity. "His women of fairylike beauty charge the air with suffocating sultriness." One hardly dares

to breathe; one stops thinking and feels the very depths of one's emotional nature expand in response to the magic wand of Rossetti the Dreamer. A dreamer he surely was, but one of that dangerous class whose dreams are realities, and whose actions are those of waking men. Intellectual people who need a supernatural stimulant to rouse their finer sensibilities will find the influence of Rossetti wholesome. His influence, however, is poison for delicate constitutions, who find it difficult to put aside the inactivity of a sense-gratifying ease.

From the merely artistic side his strongest point was his fine decorative sense and his beautiful color schemes. His drawing was rarely masterful, although it was not so arbitrary as that of his famous follower, *Sir Edward Burne-Jones* (1833-1898). This man of an almost sanctified disposition was studying theology when he first met Rossetti. He abandoned theology, and, encouraged by his new friend, took up painting. At first ridiculed by the public, he saw himself suddenly raised to fame, and always held the place of honor in the newly founded Grosvenor Gallery.

He did not belong to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and was little concerned with truth of details. He had the gift of filling given spaces with decorative grace, but in so doing often did violence to natural semblance. He took similar liberties with color—aiming solely at artistic effects—and with the character of his figures, painting, as some one has said, “his men as women and his women sexless.” He will, nevertheless, continue to be a favorite with all who are satisfied with a feast for the eyes, or who, knowing the man, are able to reconstruct from his pictures his inspiring and noble personality.

Even more distinctly decorative than Burne-Jones, *Walter Crane* (1845—) has succeeded in combining the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites with classically beautiful forms. He too, like all decorative painters, constantly takes liberties with perspective and other requirements of drawing, but there is in his work “a measured nobility of form” as compared with the “paucity of flesh and plenitude of feeling” of Burne-Jones. Crane is better known for his text illustrations than for his paintings.



With *George Frederick Watts* (1817-1904) the Pre-Raphaelite tendencies cease to be a powerful and immediate influence. One feels in his works the same intensity of emotional feeling, although it is there not for its own sake but to serve an end. Watts was a firm believer in the nobility of art and in the fine lessons which she might teach. He was a deeply religious man, but not of the type of Holman Hunt; for he cared naught for dogma or sacred stories. His vision went beyond all such accidents, as he might have said, to essential truths.

In his composition he was remarkably simple; one or two figures generally sufficed him, but these he painted with care and wonderful skill. He was a student of the antique, and one often finds in his draperies echoes from the Parthenon pediments, which, thanks to Lord Elgin, he could conveniently study in the British Museum.

Watts also painted landscapes, but most especially portraits. The latter are exquisite character studies, although they are at times hard and not always soothing to the eye. He no longer wasted his time on details, but concentrated his attention

on essentials. To this extent he was opposed to the Pre-Raphaelite tendencies. He also cared less for the slender models of the early Renaissance than for the fuller forms of the later Italians. Their luxurious color, however, he avoided, stating that it was not so much his intention to please the eye as to arouse noble thoughts. These he hoped would speak to the heart and the imagination, and kindle in the breasts of the people whatever was best and noble in them.

By the side of Watts the more recent academicians, with their cool and measured perfection of technique and their great scholarship, are singularly unimpressive. These men endeavor to reconstruct whole periods of the history of culture and, although they never fail to arouse admiration for their command of details, they are rarely convincing. Those, for instance, who know classic antiquities will recognize in the clever pictures of *Frederick Lord Leighton* (1830-1896) or of *Laurenz Alma-Tadema* (1836—) the forms and the setting of the antique, but they will miss its spirit. These pictures are pleasant



GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

Love and Death

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AT  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

to look at, but, as has been said, they "belong neither in museums nor in houses, but solely in the palatial mansions of the landed aristocracy."

To this class of artists belong also *Edward Poynter* (1836—) and possibly *Albert Moore* (1841–1892), the latter painting graceful women who exist only for the sake of their own loveliness. *Briton Rivière* (1840—) was more distinctly a painter of genre; his compositions were magnificent, skillfully combining classic culture and nude bodies with very remarkable studies from the animal world.

*George Heming Mason* (1818–1872) held a unique position, surrounding his landscapes and peasants with sweet dreaminess and poetic glamour. His was a sad life; brought up in affluence, and forsaking the medical profession for painting when he was twenty-seven years of age, he suddenly found himself penniless, owing to his father's unexpected bankruptcy. He was never a well man and had to struggle hard to make a living. All this shows in his work, which, however beautiful, lacks wholesome vigor.

The best known portraitists of the latter years of the nineteenth century were, next to Millais and Watts, *Hubert von Herkomer* (1849 —) and *Walter William Ouless* (1848 —). The former, a German by birth, enjoys the greater reputation. Since his "Lady in White" first stirred the art world in 1886, his name has been known everywhere. It has, however, been pointed out that much of his success was due to the loveliness of his model rather than to his own perfection as an artist, and that even before him Whistler and Bastien-Lepage had handled similar subjects — white against white — with greater success. The best that Professor Muther has to say of Herkomer is that he is a man of "a tame but tastefully cultivated temperament."

In Scotland painting has recently followed its own course. The older movement centered in Edinburgh and was led by men like *William Quiller Orchardson* (1835 —), *John Phillip* (1817–1867), and *John Pettie* (1839–1893). Their love of color and their honest impetuosity called for attention. Better known, however, is a more recent movement which started in the neighborhood of



Glasgow with *Robert Macgregor*, and aspires to freedom from tradition. Macgregor and his friends profess adherence to no school and believe in salvation by the perfection of each one's individuality. This perfection, they hold, is the result of sincere and serious labor. Consequently a fresh and wholesome atmosphere pervades their work, which, unfortunately, is as yet little known in America.

Those who have watched this new Scotch school<sup>1</sup> prophesy for it a glorious future. It is, however, possible that after all its chief activity may be missionary, for many of the artists have migrated from Glasgow either to the Continent or to London or to any other place where their growing reputation has assured them success. At present the most widely known of them is *John Lavery* (1857—), who shares with Shannon and Sargent the favor of London's high society. But unlike these two giants of skill and brilliancy, he possesses in addition poetic charm and gives evidence of being himself a sympathetic and lovable optimist. His portraits, further, are more

<sup>1</sup> The men themselves decry the term "school," which smacks of rules and regulations, and declare themselves free.



than portraits; they are exquisite pictures, which the eye surveys with ease and a distinct sense of physical pleasure. They are simple in composition, harmonious in tone, and the unmistakable renderings of well-defined moods. The man who painted them was not continuously changing his course on the sea of spiritual experience. On the contrary, he had found his bearings.

No survey of British painting, finally, would be at all satisfactory without mention of the important part played by the painters in water colors. As early as 1805 these men founded a society, and have at all times done much to educate the public and their fellow-artists to a proper appreciation of the niceties of detailed work and the brightness of colors. They have undoubtedly exerted a powerful influence on the later landscape painters, for it is very probable that they were the first to call attention to the rather monotonous and unsatisfactory brownish tones which had been in use for several generations. Ruskin himself did some extremely good work in water colors, and all the best work in this line has, in fact, been done by his contemporaries.

The most famous artists of Great Britain flourished at a time when art was at its lowest level everywhere else. Reynolds and Gainsborough have no peers among their successors. The gradual diminution of the worth of British painting was arrested only once, as a dark afternoon may be brightened by an uncanny sunbeam from behind the clouds, by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Ruskin's teachings, in spite of the inspiration which they have brought and are still bringing to multitudes of people, are not so consistently founded on truth and knowledge of natural conditions that they can build up a national art. They can discover defects and shatter false standards, but they are unable to arouse wholesome and energetic individuality.

While there is much that is pleasing in British academic circles, the germ of promise, it would seem, rests with the Scotchmen. Strangely enough theirs is a democratic art, so that the time may come when Great Britain will lose her proud position as the only aristocrat among the artistic nations of the world.

## CHAPTER IV

### AMERICAN PAINTING

American painting to-day is the worthy second of the best art in the world, and in some branches, perhaps, ranks first. It is sincere and wholesome, technically sound, and inspired by lofty ideals. It also shows much common sense and reveals the vigorous stock from which the artists are recruited. Nowhere does it fall subject to the overdelicate taste of those last scions of highly cultivated races, who are known as degenerates. It is a pleasing art, often brilliant, and generally good to live with. Of course there are exceptions, but, on the whole, visitors to American exhibitions are well satisfied; they have come in contact with the works of noted men.

Leaving the American section at any of the recent large fairs, a man might easily have asked himself how it is possible that people who have been a nation hardly sixscore years can produce an art so singularly free from such defects as are



JOHN SINGER SARGENT  
Portrait of Mrs. Ian Hamilton

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due to prejudice, idiosyncrasies, or ignorance. The answer to such queries is supplied by the historian, who points to the beneficial mingling of the races in this large territory, and to the opportunities which the country has offered for the exercise of well-developed faculties. All foreigners who have entered into the spirit of the land testify to the clarifying effect which the free intercourse with men of other extraction has had upon their mental make-up. It is as if minds heretofore fettered by what may be peculiar English, French, German, Slavish, or Italian prejudices were permitted to unfold themselves without restrictions, the bias of the one race acting as an infallible antidote to those of the others. If American painting is to continue its phenomenal development, care must be taken that no distinctly American prejudice is permitted to rivet new fetters for the scarcely yet liberated mind. People who judge the nation by European standards and push her from her proper sphere of quiet growth into the whirlpool of foreign competition should be considered her worst enemies. People who cry for a national

art, meaning an art shaped by distinctly American notions, just as the art of France or Germany is shaped by notions peculiar to these countries, will, if they succeed, have done their best to destroy the greatest charm of what is now called American art. People who teach patriotism, as the word is frequently understood, worshiping some national hero because he was an American and not because of some noble traits of character, instill into the coming generation erroneous standards.

The American people throughout their short period of existence seemed to have possessed the faculty of assimilating the best products of foreign endeavors. English, German, and French influences in succession have shaped their art standards, no one being able to continue its hold when its prime had passed. The first artists naturally turned to England, being born British subjects, for the War of the Revolution did not take place until this earliest generation of painters had attained to maturity, and even a few of them had died.

*John Smibert* (1684-1751) and *Jonathan B. Blackburn* (1700-1760) were respectable portrait



painters, settling, unlike their more obscure predecessors, who were traveling artists, in one place for a considerable number of years. Both men selected Boston. Smibert came to America in 1728, while Blackburn probably was born here. Their best pictures are the equal of contemporary British portraits painted just before the sudden rise of British art in the middle of the eighteenth century, and certainly set a standard of excellence in the new country, not so much by what they actually revealed as by what they aimed at. They were, moreover, not unlike the early works of Copley.

With *John Singleton Copley* (1737-1815) the worthy history of American painting begins. He was a born artist whose individual points of excellence far outshone those defects of his art which were due to circumstances and lack of early training. But this does not mean that he began to paint late in life, for at seventeen he had already achieved a certain reputation, but that the technical side of art is so complex that no one lifetime suffices to solve its many problems. A man needs the opportunity of taking over as a whole,

so to speak, the achievements of his predecessors. The earlier in life this opportunity offers itself, the easier it is to grasp it. Copley went abroad for the first time when he was about forty years of age, and it was then that he first saw masterpieces in sufficient quantities. His work, therefore, falls into two classes,—the portraits of his youth in America and those of his maturity in England. The latter very properly belong to British art, for Copley was born a British subject and left America before her political independence was recognized.

His American portraits are wonderful products of a faithful rendering of nature. The artistic intentions which in grouping, posing, color, and brushwork made the canvases of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and even Copley himself, in his later years, such charming bits of independent realities had little place in his early works. These were national and historical records. In his men and women that whole period lives again. One admires the sure eye and the clever hand of the portraitist, but derives very little æsthetic pleasure from the pictures themselves.

Copley set the tide going toward Great Britain. For more than a generation American artists turned to the mother country for instruction in their chosen calling. It is, however, a noteworthy fact that most of them were men of experience before they went abroad. They knew what they lacked and knew exactly what they wanted to acquire. In this respect they differed from the later artists who went to Europe when young to receive there their first training. Under these conditions it is natural that the foreign instruction should have variously affected the earlier and the later men, the former never losing their own established individuality.

In early years portraits were the only pictures for which there was any demand in America, so that it was fortunate for the country that her artists turned to Great Britain, where this branch of art was especially flourishing. One of them, *Benjamin West* (1738-1820), was well established in London, thanks to royal favor, where he served as a guide and warm friend to multitudes of men who, unlike himself, returned to America to practice their art. All held West in grateful memory;

and although his paintings do not entitle him to a lasting place of honor, the services he rendered to the art of his country in this indirect way are such that he may be called in more ways than one the Father of American Art. The only clear effect exerted by West on the development of painting was by his picture "The Death of General Wolfe," where he dared to represent his figures not in classic costumes but in the clothes which they actually wore. Most of his work is historical, but instead of being dramatic it is theatrical, and since its color is monotonous there is little pleasure to be derived from it.

Gifted with the charm of innate nobility of character and possessed of a great warm heart, West was, personally, one of the most accomplished and amiable men of his day. *Gilbert Charles Stuart* (1755-1828) was the very opposite of West; as an artist he was his superior, and as a companion he was as unpleasant as West was delightful. He too, nevertheless, had a powerful attraction for people, many of whom he attached to himself, although he frequently offended even his friends by his choleric fits of

temper. He differed from earlier portrait painters in his endeavor to represent character, not being satisfied with a faithful rendering of visible forms. He had little use for large pictures<sup>1</sup> and painted heads almost exclusively, which, for a whim of his own, he generally placed in the middle of the picture. His technique, which was distinctly his own, is described by Mr. Isham<sup>2</sup> thus: "He paints with an unequaled purity and freshness of color, very delicate and sure in the half tones, varying it to suit the individual, but with a pearly brightness which is characteristic. The paint is put on thinly, as a rule, in short decided touches."

Stuart was survived fifteen years by *John Trumbull* (1756-1843), although these two men were born only one year apart. With the death of Trumbull in 1843 the middle of the nineteenth century was almost reached. Most of the artists of the second period of American art were then

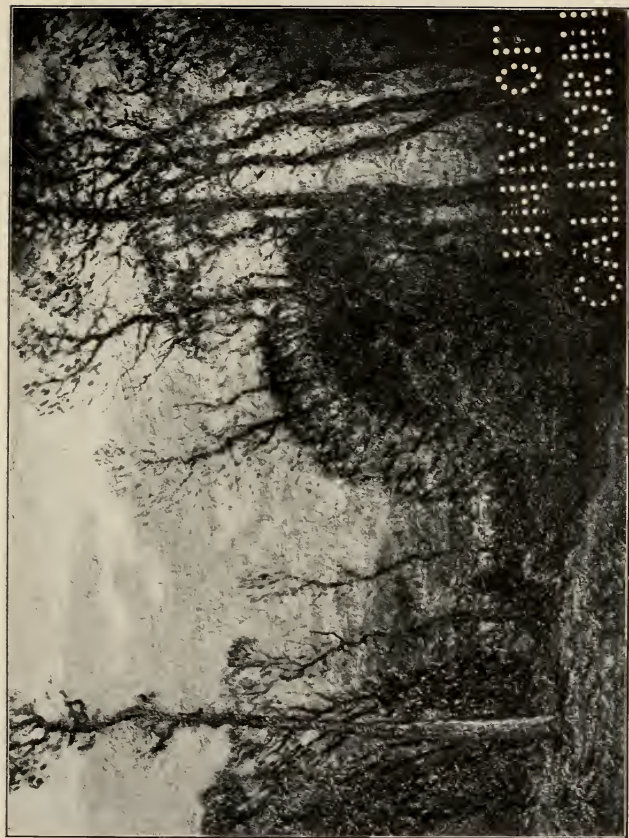
<sup>1</sup> Stuart generally painted on wood panels, and seems to have used canvas only on rare occasions.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Isham, *History of American Painting*, 1905. Mr. Isham has been the first to write comprehensively on this subject. His treatment is so fair and sympathetic, and yet dictated by such strict adherence to sound principles of art, that his book in the very year of its appearance became a classic.

grown to young manhood, and several men who are still progressively active to-day, such as La Farge, Vedder, and Enneking, were born. Trumbull was a pupil of West, a fact which almost links the present generation to the Father of American Painting, and reveals the short space of time covered by American art.

Trumbull, on his return home, selected New York as his place of residence, an event which closed possibly forever any possibility of Boston or Philadelphia becoming the art center of America. So much has been said about Trumbull's unkindness to younger men who did not bow to him, and the many stumbling-blocks which he placed in the way of their development, that one is apt to forget his remarkable services to the cause not only of art but also of artists. He won the respect of influential citizens and interested the moneyed classes in art; in short, he established a society of sympathetic connoisseurs, — men of means and social position, who were eager to encourage native talent. It may be argued that even without the efforts of Colonel Trumbull—he had been an officer in the army—there would have





JOHN J. ENNEKING

Landscape



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been men to play the rôle of Mæcenas to American artists; but this may well be doubted, for an honest interest in art matters was not one of the accomplishments of that generation.

As president of the American Academy of Arts<sup>1</sup> Trumbull exerted another influence as a conservative power. The restrictions of all academic standards have been so often justly exposed that one readily forgets the value of such institutions. They act like regulators, preventing the pace which some individuals would set from becoming so fast that the entire mechanism of wholesome development is thrown out of gear.

As an artist Trumbull ranked high, although his later work disappointed the expectations raised by his earlier pictures. He was a good portrait painter, but lacked the individuality of Stuart. He is best known for his historical pictures. One of his last commissions, in fact, was an order from Congress to paint four such pictures for the Capitol in Washington. Unfortunately he was then an old man, without sufficient energy or

<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1802 under a slightly different title, and incorporated in 1808. Trumbull was its first vice president and was elected its president in 1818.

inspiration to acquit himself well of this task. Since these pictures, however, became more widely known than any others, his reputation has unduly suffered on their account, until to-day many fail to appreciate his true worth.

Among the other early figure painters Allston, Sully, and Malbone stand out clearly from the rest.

*Washington Allston* (1779-1843), once hailed as a genius, is now all but forgotten. He was a most fascinating man, whose reputation rested more on what people expected of him than on what he actually accomplished. From Coleridge to Washington Irving, not to speak of his artist friends, all worshiped him. Allston delighted in portraying emotions, and, like most painters of similar tendencies, was unable to find the golden mean. The sympathetic spectator, nevertheless, who needs but a suggestion to reveal to him the thoughts of the artist will like the work of Allston. There is a dignity, however crudely expressed, in his "Prophet Jeremiah," for instance, as he sits intently listening to the heavenly inspiration, and such a fine contrast between him and the

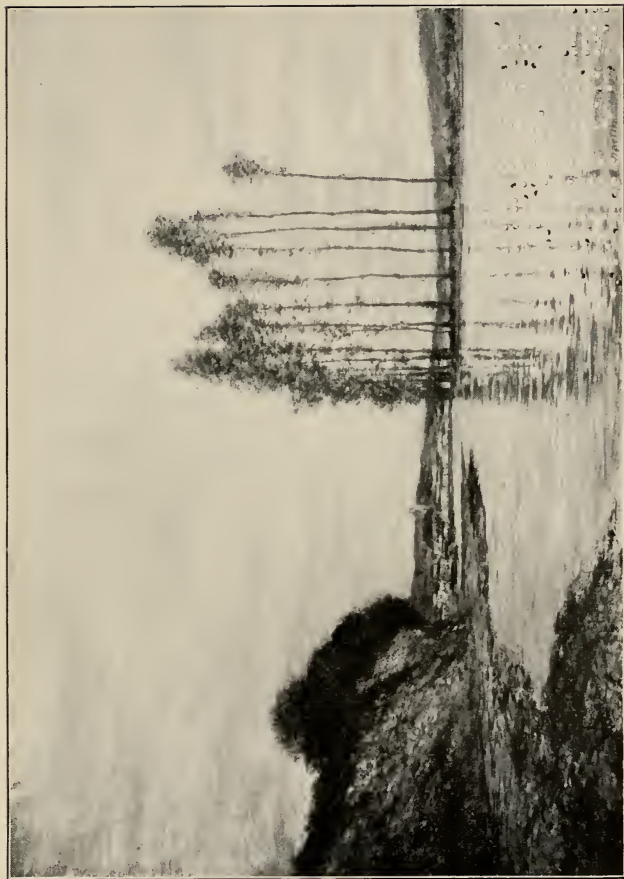
listening scribe at his feet that the man who once has grasped Allston's meaning painfully feels the weakness of Sargent's magnificently painted prophets on the frieze in the Boston Library.

*Thomas Sully* (1783-1872), who lived until within twenty-five years of the twentieth century, was a graceful painter, often sentimental, especially in his portraits of women, but sometimes wonderfully pleasing. He showed in several pictures, notably the portrait of Dr. Samuel Coates, a feeling for space, such as appears in none of the works of his earlier contemporaries. His color, too, singles him out from the rest, for it has an enchanting warmth all its own.

*Edward Malbone* (1787-1807) died young, when he was barely twenty years of age, so that it is hardly fair to judge his work by the mature achievements of the other men. However, in one branch of art—miniatures—he made a lasting name for himself in spite of his youth. "They are excellent," says Isham, "and would hold a respectable place anywhere."

## SECOND PERIOD

None of the earlier men had shown any marked interest in landscape painting. This was reserved for the next generation, and coincided with the growth of a new society in America. After the War of 1812, when the recently won independence seemed firmly established and the ties with the mother country were broken forever, the old aristocracy had ceased to exist, and with it went the men whose noble countenances had dignified the portraits of the earliest painters. "The graces of life" had given way to the virtues, not that the latter had not been included in the former, but that these surely were no longer expected to be combined with the accomplishments of the national leaders. "Good and beautiful" was the Greek designation of a gentleman, and it was applicable to the American men of note during the Revolutionary era. If "beautiful" refers not only to the outward appearance but also to the general deportment and the way in which the sterling qualities of character are displayed, then this word should perhaps be dropped from the epithet



HOMER MARTIN  
View on the Seine

[illegible]



applied to the American man during the decades following the War of 1812. Simultaneously there also disappeared the style of portrait and figure painting which was characteristic of the first period of American art.

*Chester Harding* (1792-1866) alone continued the early traditions, so that he may almost be reckoned in the same class with Copley, Trumbull, and Sully. His style, however, was as rugged as his characteristically American temperament, for which reason he is generally classed with the men of the second and more distinctly national period.

With *William Morris Hunt* (1824-1879) the break with the past is complete. Allston is the only one of his precursors to whom he bears the slightest resemblance, and, like him, he was of a thoroughly poetic disposition. Hunt no longer sought instruction from Great Britain, but from France, where he was a pupil of Couture and of Millet. His chief importance lies not in his pictures, albeit many of them are inspiring, but in his ability as a teacher. "He certainly was," in the words of Professor Van Dyke, "the first painter

in 'America who taught catholicity of taste, truth, and sincerity in art, and art in the artist rather than in the subject." The last is the noteworthy thing. It means that technique is very well, in fact absolutely necessary, but that it will create a masterpiece only if the man who wields it has the requisite largeness of character.

*George Fuller* (1822-1884) was even more of a poet than Hunt; he was a man of skill too, but one-sided and apt to disregard the requirements of technique. The subjects and forms of his pictures were generally lacking in worth, but his canvases express "by means of color and atmosphere" singularly poetic emotions. Fuller's life was not successful. Before he was forty years of age family considerations induced him to leave his artist friends and to settle on a farm in Deerfield. He continued painting until his death, although he practically disappeared from all exhibitions for more than fifteen years. In his younger days he painted portraits in the old accustomed style.

Of far greater importance than the figure painters of this period were the painters of landscape. They were men with the enthusiasm of

discoverers. Settling in the mountains which overlook the majestic Hudson, they conceived a burning love for the scenery of their native land. Diversified as were their tastes, they are generally grouped together as forming the Hudson River or White Mountain school.

*Thomas Cole* (1801-1848) was the earliest of these artists. Strangely enough he was of foreign birth, but he quickly became a better American than many men born in the country. He certainly was the first to discover the beauty of the Hudson, and by his views of it he will live long after his other works, such as the series of pictures called the "Voyage of Life" and the "Course of Empire," by which he sought to teach moral lessons, have been forgotten.

*John F. Kensett* (1818-1872) was one of the greatest of these Hudson River artists. It is noteworthy that he endeavored to render nature accurately, with no thought of an artistic rearrangement, which is the more remarkable because he rarely painted from nature but generally from accurate sketches. He had a facile hand and an open eye for the various moods

of the seasons and the hours of the day. It is this versatility that raises him above *Asher Brown Durand* (1796-1886), his immediate predecessor, who often attained to greater truth than he, because he painted what he actually saw out of doors and did not trust to his memory or to sketches in the execution of his pictures.

*R. Sandford Gifford* (1823-1880) was moved by different considerations, for he held that the artistic appearance of his canvases was of fully as much importance as their truth to nature; or, as Mr. Isham puts it, "He is the first to base the whole interest of a picture on purely artistic problems, such as the exact value of sunlit sails against an evening sky."

*Frederick Edwin Church* (1826-1900) exemplified an entirely different doctrine, which in its very foundation is by no means so strongly opposed to that of Gifford as may at first appear. He, too, believed in the independent reality of a picture, but he drew from this creed a different conclusion. Art should be more powerfully impressive than nature; therefore the transcriptions of ordinary scenes are insufficient.

This led him to hunt over the countries for striking views, and wherever he found one, at home or abroad, he painted it, adding to it from his own vivid imagination such qualities of light or color as would make it most stirring. His artistic intentions, one might say, ran riot with him; but so beautiful were these intentions that the finished product, however studied and lacking in spontaneity, rarely fails to arouse pleasure and even a sense of admiration in the spectator.

*Albert Bierstadt* (1830-1902) was another foreigner who so intimately identified himself with the art tendencies of his adopted country that he appears to be a true American. Like Church he looked for imposing sceneries, and found them in the Rocky Mountains. He had a keen perception of the grandeur of nature, and knew how to make her even more imposing than she is.

The two remaining men of this set of great landscape painters, *Alexander H. Wyant* (1836-1892) and *George Inness* (1825-1894), form the connecting link between their fellows and the painters of the present day. They followed an entirely different ideal from that of Cole, Church,

or Bierstadt; it was an ideal more akin to that of Durand or Kensett, and one that is universally recognized to-day as the more worthy. Their conception of the value of the visible picture was not less, but their respect for nature was greater; and they knew that the most powerful message is not always conveyed by gigantic mountains or remarkable phenomena, but, on the contrary, by placid sceneries. The quiet orchard, the still meadows, and peaceful country districts,—all can speak to him who listens. And they listened. They sank their personality in the vastness of nature's great appeal to mankind.

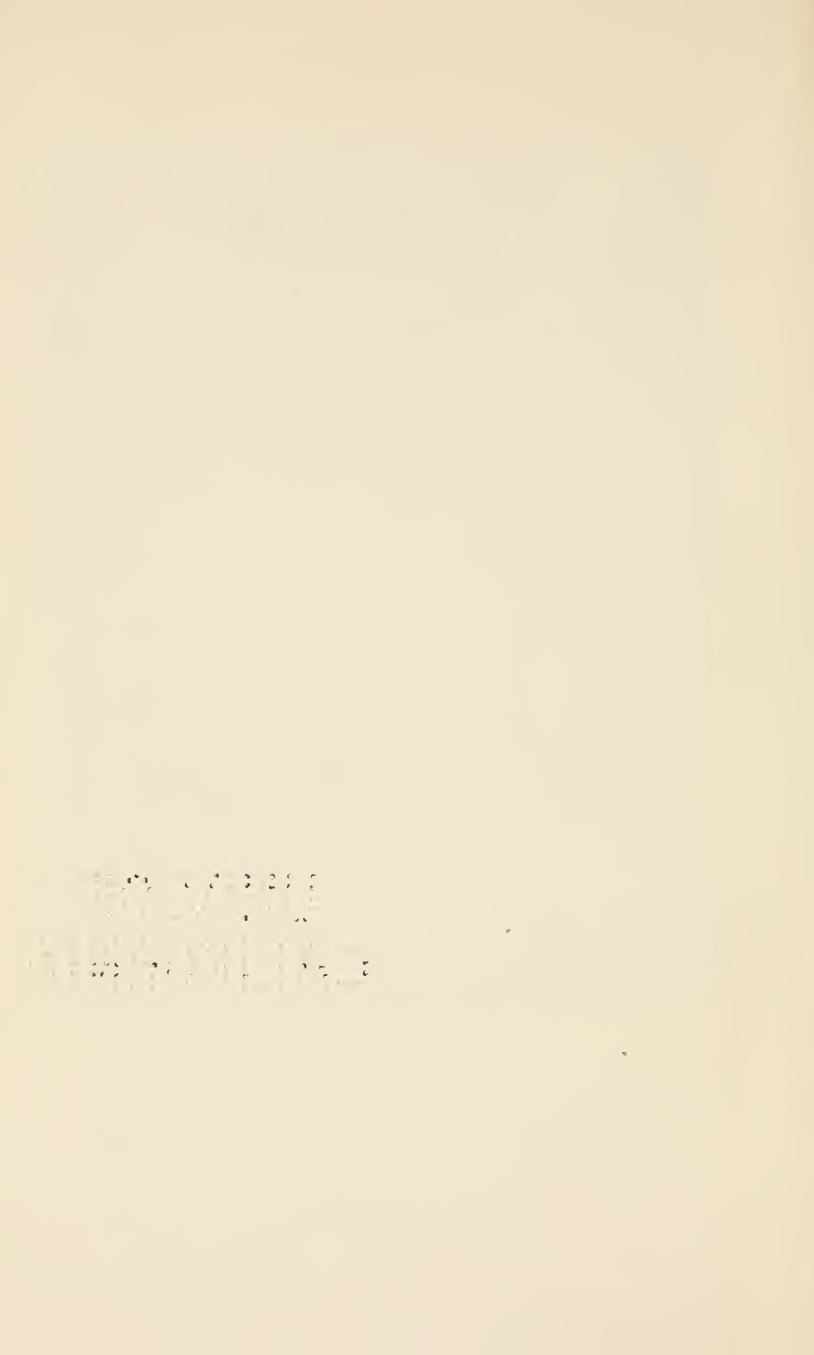
Inness was the leader. He had learned to know nature as well as Corot and his Barbizon friends knew her. "Like a Greek," it has been said, "he felt God in the stream or grove, the immanent presence of superhuman powers"; and like a Greek, he knew how to make the spectator see with his eyes and feel with his emotions. Wyant followed in his path, and, although a less versatile man, added to his achievements such a delicate refinement that he stands unrivaled in this respect by any other American.





ASHER BROWN DURAND  
Landscape





## THIRD PERIOD

All these men had formed their styles and achieved their reputations prior to the first World's Fair held in America in 1876. On this occasion there were exhibited in this country collections of pictures from abroad, which made such a powerful impression on the native artists that 1876 is generally taken as the date when the third period of American art begins, — a period during which the technical skill of the artists has been developed to such a degree that it may be said to be inferior to none. In the preceding period most of the men who went abroad sought instruction in Germany, first in Düsseldorf and later in Munich. After 1876 most art students went to France. Italy, of course, had always been visited by all who could afford it, but not so much for contact with living men as for the inspiration derived from the old masters. Unlike the first American painters, those of the recent generation went abroad as young and untried men, eager to learn the rudiments of their art from the famous artists in France. If one runs through any modern

catalogue of artists, one finds nine men out of every ten listed as pupils of foreign painters, and only quite recently have reputable artists appeared who have received their entire training at home.

It is difficult to draw a line between those men who belong to the second period of American art and those who belong to the third; for many may be claimed for both. If a line must be drawn, it is wise to group men like Enneking and Homer Martin, who have bravely continued in the front ranks, with the modern men; and others like Hunt, Bierstadt, and Fuller, who to the last have exemplified the spirit of an earlier age, with the artists of the second period.

Versatility is a characteristic of the modern Americans; therefore few men can be said to be painters either of figures or landscapes or marines exclusively. The best men, however, have made their mark in one of these three special branches, which fact enables one to classify them accordingly.

*John J. Enneking* (1841—) is one of the foremost landscapists. He enters into the moods of

nature as tenderly as did the old masters of Barbizon, but he sees color rather than lines and masses. He is an Impressionist of the Impressionists, although he has no patience with their excesses. During his long life he has thought even more than he has observed and painted, and in consequence has evolved a remarkably beautiful style of his own. His autumn scenes, which keep all the fairylike beauty of an October day in New England, made his reputation. Of late, however, he has turned away from them; they are too real and leave too little to the suggestiveness of a noble spirit. Like Whistler he no longer cares to see nature fully revealed. His latest picture is a view of the mountains enveloped in mist which the rising sun is transforming into an incandescent sea of myriads of lights. "It was a beautiful view," he says, "one to satisfy even the hungriest soul, but when the mist was gone everything was gone." All his latest pictures are painted in what he calls one or two plains, meaning distinct areas of light. "One plain is good," he says, "two plains fine, and three or more are bad almost every time"; for when there are three or more plains the

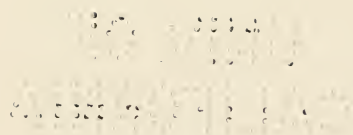
picture loses its oneness and sinks to the level of an almost photographic reproduction of local tones.

*James McNeil Whistler* (1834-1903) followed the same principle, although he seems not to have formulated it. He was driven to its acceptance by the delicacy of his eyes and the ethereal preferences of his spirit, which dreaded in a picture everything that smacked of corporeal reality. Art to him was food for the spirit. It matters little that he denied a voice in matters artistic to the soul or the intellect. His own senses were so fine that they were practically spiritual. He saw in the dignified figure of his mother all that this one word means; but when people were pleased with his picture, and said he had painted more than mortal eyes behold in a mere body, he grew angry, and replied he had painted only what he had seen. If this is true, then his eyes had both natural and spiritual sight; for his "*Sarasate*" also, for instance, is far more than a portrait of this famous violinist; it is a perfect embodiment of the idea, — music.

Whistler has been called a colorist, but not in the sense of the man who combines bright hues



JAMES ABBOTT MCNEIL WHISTLER  
The White Girl





in pleasant harmonies, but of him who combines the greatest varieties of shades of a few subdued hues in one grand chord. Whistler himself called many of his pictures symphonies. They were rather chords, — simple, clear, powerful chords that swell and swell until they seem to envelop the whole universe. In addition he was a dreamer who stood at night at the banks of the Thames and saw unfolded all the magic beauty of fairy-land, and painted it, and could not understand why everybody had not seen it. Technically Whistler was undoubtedly influenced by his admiration for Japanese painting, for he was one of the first in the western world to appreciate Japanese art, which is based on spiritual and not on physical realities. The secret of his art was the nobility and delicacy of his spirit. Whatever he saw he felt, or, one may almost say, what he did not feel he did not see, and certainly never painted.

No greater contrast can be imagined than exists between Whistler and *John Singer Sargent* (1856 —), the Realist, who by his supreme skill almost convinces the thoughtless that the present age has no spirit and worships only material and

visual realities. Brilliant, unscrupulous, restless, he is never at a loss for means of expression. He will paint a head or a hand over and over again, if only at last he gets that touch of daring spontaneity which does not go beyond a vivid first impression. To this passion he sacrifices everything. His innumerable portraits, in consequence, are highly sensational, and show "disquiet, lack of equilibrium, and absence of principle." They reveal, on the other hand, a technique as perfect as it is versatile, and demand admiration for the painter while they engender distrust for the man. If, centuries from now, people should endeavor to reconstruct, from Sargent's undoubtedly excellent likenesses, the moral status of to-day, they would surmise that gentleness, hope, truth, and happiness had been unknown. Even his women are rarely given without the spice of latent vice. It must, however, not be believed that Sargent is willfully wicked, far from it. He is one of the most conscientious followers of his profession, caring for little else than painting, giving himself at all times just as he is. But, as has been rightly said, "his gifts are those of the senses rather than

those of the spirit." He too paints what he sees, and it is either our misfortune that we can see so little nobility in his pictures, or his that he so rarely sees anything noble in his sitters. Or maybe it is our mutual misfortune that a man of his unequalled gifts should live in an age when so much perverse rather than fine human nature reveals itself to his accurate eye.

Mr. Sargent is so popular as portrait painter that he does not often leave this field of art. His two notable excursions into the realm of decorative art occasioned a storm of controversy. First came his frieze of the prophets in the Boston Public Library, underneath his allegorical "March of Civilization," and then his "Dogma" in the same building. The latter picture did not please the popular fancy. The color scheme is good, but the subject itself and its treatment are so void of serious, deep-felt thought that only few people consider this picture worthy of Sargent. It is different with the earlier decoration. Here the artist has painted *con amore*; the colors are sensuously beautiful, and distributed with a skill and spontaneity which reveal the

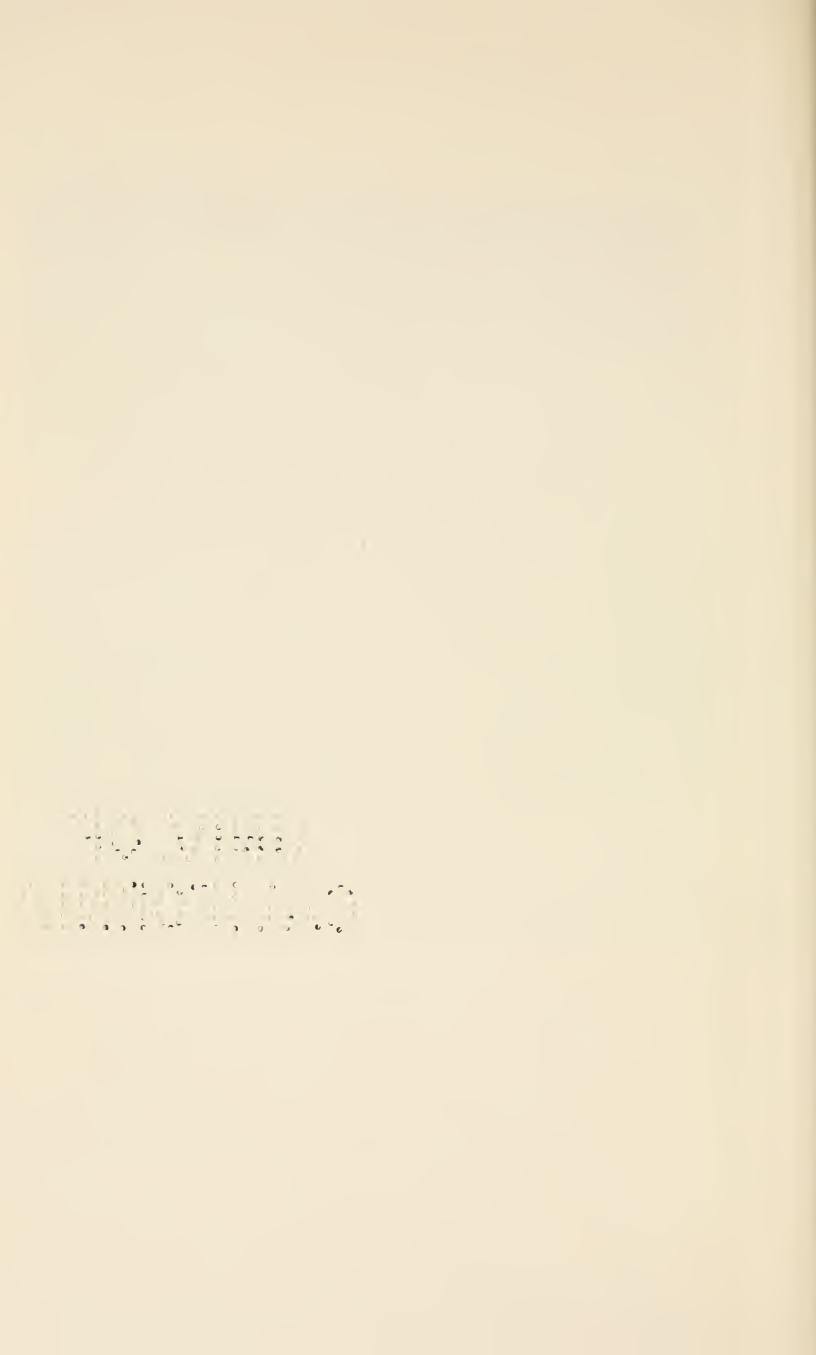
master. At closer acquaintance, however, even this picture loses its charm, because the individual figures are mere bodies,—they have no characters. The painter has not felt the force of personalities, which alone can give lasting value to such a decoration. But how could this be otherwise? Instead of thinking of personalities, the painter considered only persons,—bodies,—and these he painted from models. One of the prophets who enjoyed the greatest popularity at first, was painted from an Italian model who was draped for this purpose and had to stand thus for four hours and twenty minutes! One may paint a portrait of Mr. X—— in this fashion, but how can one expect to do justice thus, without thought or contemplation, to the prophet Hosea!

Of the other best known American portrait painters, only *James Jebusa Shannon* (1862 —) makes his permanent home in England. He is less aggressive and spontaneous than Sargent, and generally strives for charm, which he instills not only into the canvas but also into the person there represented. In America he is almost



JOSEPH R. DE CAMP

Girl with the Lute



unknown, but in Great Britain he is one of the most popular painters, especially with the aristocracy, many of whom prefer his "poems" to the brusque and pointed *dicta* of Sargent. Of those who live at home, *John W. Alexander* (1856 —), *Cecilia Beaux*, *William M. Chase* (1849 —), *Joseph R. De Camp* (1858 —), *Edmund C. Tarbell* (1862 —), and, of the very latest generation, *Albert Felix Schmitt* (1873 —) may be mentioned as representative, and following each his or her own style.

Alexander is modern to the core, not only in his mode of painting but also in his selections. His pictures are always interesting, frequently daring, but never lacking in taste. Without lowering the level of his art, he invariably knows how to find that point where the preferences of the masses intersect the fastidious desiderata of the connoisseur. Miss Beaux, on the other hand, who formerly painted charmingly, has recently been carried away by her peculiar technique, so that her last exhibitions showed a small minority of pleasing canvases. Dashing spontaneity and daring coloring are not, in



themselves, sufficient to satisfy either the public or the artists.

Unlike either of these painters, *William M. Chase* has won his laurels not by outbursts of brilliancy, but by sane and unremitting labor. His services as teacher in New York are such that much of the credit for the vigorous state of art in America is due to him. The brilliancy of individual achievements obscures for a day the foundations on which the wholesome development of the art of a nation depends. America, however, is singularly fortunate in possessing not only Chase and Du Mond and Francis D. Millet, but many, many more who keep sacred the nobility of art and, unconcerned about popular applause, teach what is true and paint what is good.

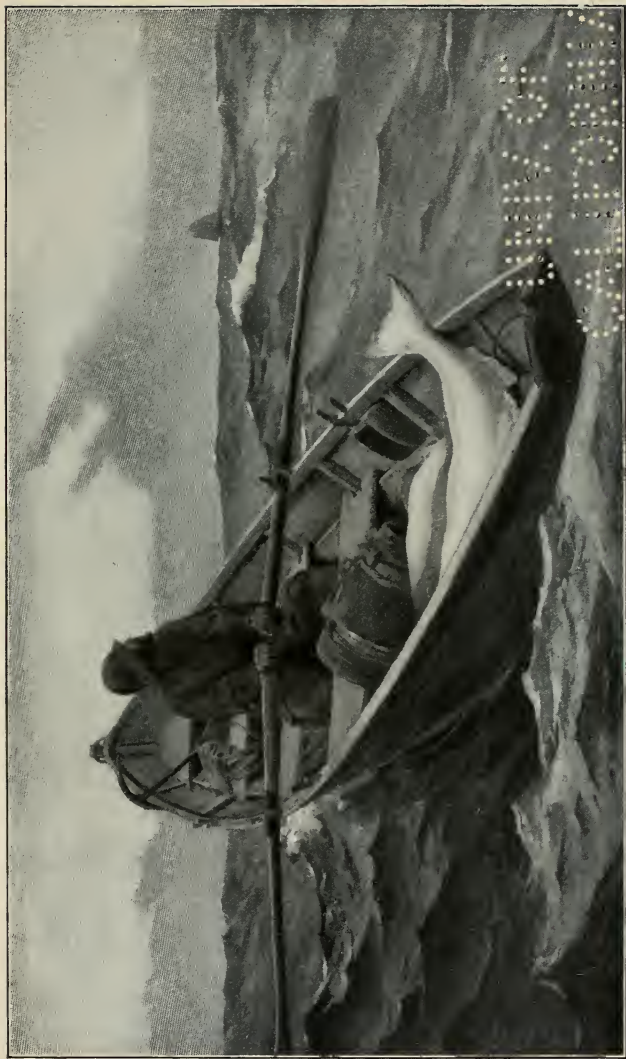
In Boston *Edmund C. Tarbell* has risen from the comparatively small group of great artists to the position of foremost master. Always an excellent painter, he has recently broadened until his pictures have come to add essentially to the moral and æsthetic wealth of the nation. There was a time when these epithets were considered contradictory, but most people have learned that

real art is never immoral, and that morals, as long as they are not æsthetic, cannot be good. The external charm of Tarbell's pictures is due to his freedom, for he knows the dictates and achievements of all modern schools and is the slave of none. His portraits, figure pieces, and groups are permeated with refinement, good taste, and that undefinable something which makes of one, when one beholds it, an optimist.

There is sometimes a certain resemblance in conception between Tarbell and *Joseph R. De Camp*, which shows itself in an unconscious selection of subjects such as pleased the Dutch Little Masters. Tarbell's "Girl Crocheting" and De Camp's "Girl with the Lute" are both pictures of which the old masters could have been proud. In technique, of course, no resemblance exists, for Tarbell and De Camp are luminists in a sense in which this word was unknown in the seventeenth century. Several years ago these two artists and eight more formed the select group of "The Ten Painters," whose annual exhibitions are among the best the world over for sanity, clean and perfect technique, and thoughtful conception.

These very same qualities characterize also the work of *J. Gari Melchers* (1860 —), an American of cosmopolitan habits, who lives in Holland but retains studios in many other places, among them New York. His motto is "Klar und Wahr," and he has kept to it always. In portraiture he is not uniformly successful, so that his "President Roosevelt" is a good picture but a poor portrait, for it in no sense suggests the character of Mr. Roosevelt.

The flourishing state of American art is best appreciated when, for a brief survey of it, one passes in review the best known names and realizes the impossibility of mentioning even a small number of them. There is *Elihu Vedder* (1838 —), with all his flaming fancies; *Abbott H. Thayer* (1849 —), who so beautifully knew how to group his children in "Charitas" and similar pictures; *George de Forest Brush* (1855 —); *Miss Mary Cassatt*; *Miss Laura Coombs Hills* (1859 —), the foremost painter of miniatures; *Childe Hassam* (1859 —); *Kenyon Cox* (1856 —), who writes as well as he paints; *Frederic Porter Vinton* (1846 —), the aristocrat of the old school; and



## Fog Bound

After the painting by Winslow Homer



*Charles H. Davis* (1856 —), who worships at the shrine of beauty. And then there is the whole large school of landscape painters, most of whom are still living, and each year adding to their reputation. Of those who have recently died, *Homer Martin* (1836-1897), *Robert C. Minor* (1840-1904), and *John H. Twachtman* (1853-1902) were the best known.

Of the marine painters, *Thomas A. Harrison* (1853 —), *Winslow Homer* (1836 —), and *Charles H. Woodbury* (1864 —) are the greatest masters, with eight or ten as close seconds. In their hands marine pictures have taken on an entirely new aspect. Woodbury, for instance, studies the sea as sincerely and intimately as the greatest landscapists have studied the land. Personally he seems to like the turbulent aspects of the ocean, rendering them at all times convincingly and without reference to man. When he paints a wave, there is no ship in sight, no shore, no swimming man, but only the wave, and this one wave becomes a true and powerful part of that one nature which we can understand because we too are of it.



One branch of American painting, mural decoration, promises to play a prominent part in the twentieth century. Some excellent work was done in the last decade of the nineteenth century and earlier, but sober second thought will convince people that the exalted praise which most of these decorations received was due more to the admiration which enthusiastic pioneers richly deserve than to the lasting value of their work. Laymen can hardly realize what practically unsurmountable obstacles the painter meets, who, for the first time, turns from his easel to the decoration of huge walls. It is like speaking in a different tongue, and, at that, on a subject which is not of one's own choosing; for every building demands subjects in keeping with its architecture, and by its lighting prescribes certain modes of composition and treatment to which the artist must submit. The ensuing renunciation of their cherished freedom has been most difficult for our artists. They had rather break new windows into the walls or insist on artificial illumination than paint according to the architectural requirements. A glaring instance of this is found in *Edwin A. Abbey's*



(1852 —) paintings of the Holy Grail in the Boston Public Library. Individually each picture of this series is a wonderfully grand illustration of a particular incident, painted in colors so beautiful and designed so impressively that it could not be better. But collectively, as mural decorations, the paintings could not be worse. They make the room top-heavy, they call, almost passionately, for light where there is none, they contradict the quadrangular shape of the room and make the spectator long to haul them down to his level. Some he wishes to see at close range, others in a distant perspective. As a result, he emerges from the room mentally bewildered and physically exhausted.

Other artists have steered clear of this Scylla, the danger of surcharging their pictures with ideas, and painting them individually beautiful, but without reference to the part they have to play as decorations of a room, but have not escaped the equally undesirable Charybdis of too little artistic worth. Gradually, however, the finest American mural decorators have evolved a style which is full of promise for the future. All look upon *John*

*La Farge* (1835—) as the father of their peculiar art in America. His is a preëminently refined artistic personality, abhorring every commonplace expression and striving incessantly for what is truly noble. Imitation is a word unknown in his vocabulary, for (this is the closing remark of one of his inspiring lectures)

On aime toujours  
Ce qu'on ne verra  
Deux fois.

Of the younger men, *Edwin H. Blashfield* (1848 —) has probably had most experience in mural decorations and won the greatest reputation. His graceful compositions have yet sufficient dignity to do justice to the exalted themes which he has had to treat, while his coloring is generally well adapted to his purpose. Less simple and straightforward, although, when successful, more pleasing and spontaneous, *Henry O. Walker* (1843 —) has taken a great step in advance. *Frank W. Benson* (1862 —), who has painted several fine figures as wall decorations, is better known for his charming out-of-door compositions, — girls in the garden with sunlight



ALBERT FELIX SCHMITT  
In Wonderland

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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playing in bush and tree and bathing hair and summer dress in glorious light. What is true of Benson is true of most mural painters: they forsake their easels not often and apparently only regretfully.

That America in all branches of painting has taken her place in the front rank is undeniable. Some observers even feel inclined to believe that before long she may become the leader of the art of the world. This, however, will only be possible if the public at large changes its attitude toward art. The American people must become more broad-minded, less provincial in art matters, and, above all, cultivate an interest in things beautiful.

## CHAPTER V

### PAINTING IN ITALY, SPAIN, AND IN THE NETHERLANDS

#### ITALIAN PAINTING

It is difficult to recognize in the Italian painters of the nineteenth century the descendants of the great Renaissance artists. The aims and accomplishments of the moderns are fundamentally different from those of earlier ages, so that the technical skill of the artists alone can give evidence of a long and splendid descent. Individually these artists are, with possibly one or two exceptions, less great than the masters of the Quattrocento and the Cinquecento. The very fact, however, that they do not aspire, as a class, to imitate their famous forerunners, but are eager to work along their own lines, is sufficient guarantee of considerable worth. They are striving after truth; and although the conquest of truth depends on breadth of vision suggesting the proper approach, serious and continued search

cannot fail to result ultimately in comprehensive culture and success.

The early nineteenth century was marked by a certain indecision as regards the proper path which art should follow. Some men still turned their eyes to the past and endeavored to create worthy pictures by combining the best elements of earlier works. The greatest of these Eclectics was *Camuccini* (1775-1844) in Rome, who only late in life began to feel the influences of the new ideals which had grown up in the north of Europe.

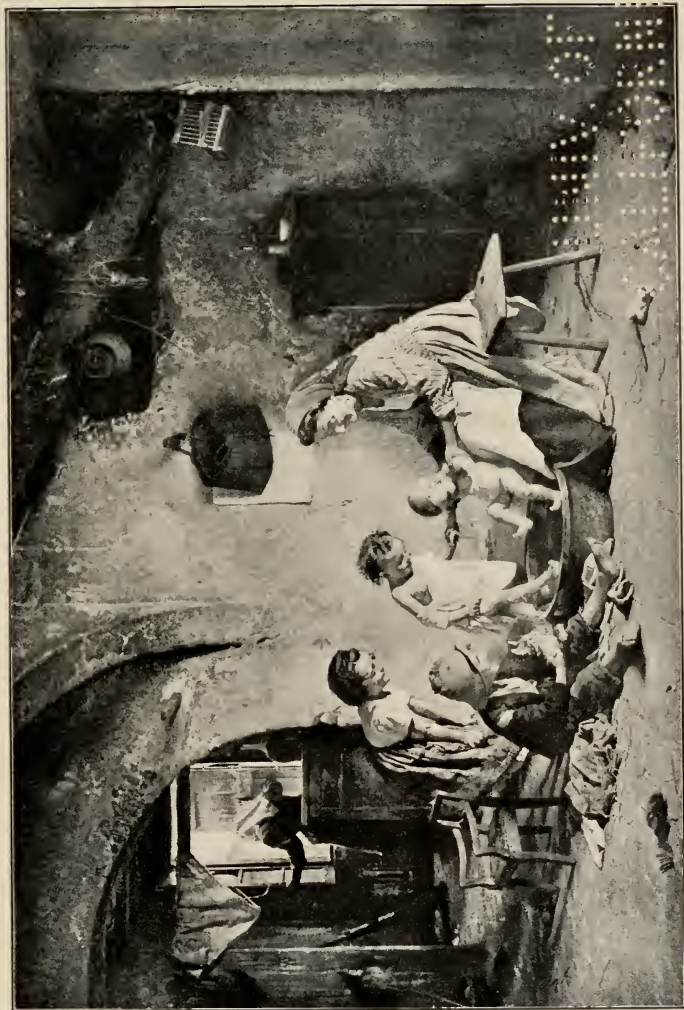
It was largely the classic school of a Frenchman, David, which had begun to find ardent admirers also in Italy. *Appiani* (1754-1817) of Milan espoused its cause, and, being a man of considerable worth, succeeded in painting pictures which even to-day deserve praise. Other artists, such as *Coghetti* (1804-1875) of Rome, sought inspiration in contact with the German Romanticists, the best of whom then lived in Rome. The Classicists and the Romanticists alike were attracted by historical subjects, so that historic and historico-religious pictures were the



best to be found in Italy in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Next to history, genre proved to be a favorite of the Italians, probably because in it the artist can show his skill. He is not bound by accidents of nature, and may design an entire picture according to the dictates of his artistic intentions. To these dictates Masaccio, early in the Quattrocento, had been the first to make allowances, establishing thus the modern art of painting. Properly coupled with truthful representations of nature, they form the foundations of good art. Exempted, on the other hand, from this union and made the leading motive, they give to pictures an air of artificiality. The charge which is justly made against most Italian genre painters is that they have laid too much emphasis on their artistic intentions, disregarding the worth of their subjects and choosing costumes, poses, and actions which, because they are not based on truth, appear to be unreal and artificial.

If these Italian genre pictures have, nevertheless, pleased many people, it has been due to the scintillating brightness of their color schemes,



GAETANO CHIERICI

The Baby's Bath

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which, real or unreal, has the power of creating an actual sense of physical pleasure. For many years, therefore, these pictures have had a good market. But this in turn has reacted on their quality, for most of them, doubtless, were painted with no higher motive than that of realizing a handsome price.

In justice to some Italian genre painters it must be said that if they disregarded truth in the selection of their subjects, painting fanciful ease of living, dancing, joy, and never a bit of work, as if their poor country abounded in wealth, even they strove after truth in execution. Their colors easily convey the irresponsible and thoughtless pursuit of pleasure which their subjects suggest.

Most of the names of the early genreists have to-day only a historic value. Several, however, have preserved their popularity, and among them especially *Gaetano Chierici* (1838—). This is due to the fact that his charming compositions, exquisitely painted, approach that degree of reality which the modern critical mind expects as a minimum.

An entirely new mode of genre painting originated in Naples at about the middle of the century. Here *Morelli* (1826 —) had begun to search after "absolute truth," that is, truth founded on the realities of visible nature rather than of imagination. He and his followers made exact studies of their actual surroundings and traveled much, especially in the East, in order to quicken their observative powers. Their realism, as was natural in the bright lands where they worked, was coupled with an exquisite brightness of color. In this respect they had, moreover, the marvelous example of the gayest of colorists, the Spaniard, *Fortuny* (1838-1874), who lived among them. "Ah, Fortuny, Fortuny," a great French artist had exclaimed, "you are the master of us all. Even in our dreams we are haunted by the splendor of your pictures." "Their color indeed glitters and sparkles and cajoles the eye," in the words of a critic, "with the charm of poems woven into oriental rugs."

Essentially different from the traditional genre painters and from the Neapolitan Realists, *Giovanni Segantini* (1858-1899) of Milan rose to

fame in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. He was of a singularly peaceful and dreamy disposition. He loved the quiet harmonies of eventide and saw the steadying influences of humble work well done, but also gladly thought of the moments of rest that follow it. The quiet and seemingly insignificant details of daily life appealed to him, because of the importance which they assumed in his imagination. He was thus, unconsciously, led to carry out the principles of the two contemporary schools of genre painters and of Realists, with whom he at first appeared to have absolutely no connection. Truth, however, presented itself to him in a new aspect, and one that is akin to the conceptions of most great modern masters.

Several younger men have begun to see things as Segantini saw them, using not only their bodily eyes but also their spiritual vision. Judging by the works seen in recent exhibitions they are in the ascendency, and eager to supplant the painters of genre pictures, that "superficial art manufactured for the benefit of the foreigner," as some one has appropriately called them. But



as yet it is difficult to discern from which quarter the wind of inspiration will continue to blow. The minds of the people have been stirred, while from the heated discussions of twenty years ago as to what constituted the highest kind of truth the artists have settled down to solve actual problems; they have begun to realize that theoretical discussions are valuable, but that in all ethical questions experience alone supplies satisfactory answers.

The places which in earlier centuries led in the pursuit of art are coming to the fore again, but so general is the intercourse of modern life that no special characteristics are attributable to the various centers of painting. As yet Milan and Naples have produced the greatest men,—Appiani, Morelli, Segantini,—with Venice and Rome close seconds, and Turin and Florence not far behind. Surveying what the Italians have thus far done, it needs no prophet's eye to tell one that in the coming century they will once more take their place by the side of the best.

Naturalism based on the most gruesome occurrences is one of the keynotes of modern Spanish



art. "Nerves accustomed to bullfights," says Professor Gensel, "one needs if one views the exhibits of the *Museo de Arte Moderno* in Madrid. Close together one sees there on the walls of one gallery 'The Insanity of Johanna of Castiles,' 'The Decapitation of Torrijo and his Followers,' 'The Bell of Huesca' with the fifteen cut-off heads, 'Johanna Insane at the Coffin of her Husband'; and in another gallery 'The Chief Inquisitor Torquemada Ines de Castro' with the fearful representation of a corpse partly decayed, 'Nero viewing the Dead Body of Agrippina,' and so forth. Everywhere insanity, blood, decomposition, and everything, life size!" The only redeeming feature of the long series of historical pictures is their exquisite technique. They are in composition and in execution equally grand.

It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the same artists excelled also in another style of painting, the simple genre. The greatest of all Spanish genre painters was *Mariano Fortuny*, who died young, before he, too, had tried his hand at bloody history. His scintillating color schemes, his studied effects which yet impress

one as singularly true, and the nobility of his conception have raised him to the highest rank among painters. In 1859 he accompanied General Prim in the campaign against Morocco, and learned to know and to admire the gayety of African life. Later he was in Paris, and after a few years at home returned to Italy where he had been as a student. He was an indefatigable worker whose remarkable successes had no other effect than to spur him on to new achievements. He died in Rome in 1874.

Recently some exquisite portraits and landscapes have also been painted in Spain. Whenever the subject offers an opportunity for the display of that fiery temper which Spaniards love, the picture is a masterpiece; for the Spanish painters possess a good technique and, owing to their fondness for naturalism, present the very personality of their sitter.

The best known of these younger men is *Ignacio Zuloaga* (1870—), whose life story reads like a fairy tale. Apprenticed to a founder of metal work, suddenly enamored of art after an accidental visit to the Prado, art student without



IGNACIO ZULOAGA  
Daniel Zuloaga and his Daughters

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teachers, a poverty-stricken failure in Rome, Paris, and London, successful bullfighter through eighteen engagements and finally gored by his next opponent, he returned to art full of enthusiasm, but with little hope, only to find that fortune had faced about and was smiling on him. His great picture of "Daniel Zuloaga and his Daughters" was bought by the Luxembourg, and soon he was hailed as one of the best of the moderns. He has gone straight back to Goya, if not to Velásquez and his fiery contemporaries. The prickling color schemes of Fortuny he does not know, but he gives one with blunt mastery what his immediate predecessors had overlooked,—the soul of Spain.

## FLEMISH PAINTING

With the dawn of the nineteenth century the long Flemish sleep of artistic inactivity which had followed upon the death of Rubens ended. David, the great French Classicist, woke the people from their lethargy. He was a born leader, so that the Flemish, or, as they are now called, the Belgian artists, naturally flocked about him

when after the fall of Napoleon he settled among them an exile. The Belgian national sympathies, however, were not with the classic tendencies which David represented. When once the Belgians had received from him their incentive to art, they soon turned to their own master, Rubens, for inspiration. They did this the more eagerly because their country in 1830 had declared its political independence, and a newly born patriotism had taken hold of the people. Soon an era of historical painting began. Huge canvases were filled with scenes taken from the history of the nation. Hugeness and accuracy of drawing do not go hand in hand. Color, however, lends itself well to the decoration of large-sized canvases. Color, moreover, had been the distinctive mark of Rubens, and as such made a sentimental appeal to the people, not to mention the fact that their national character is probably such that it is better able to appreciate the beauty of color than that of line. Outside the regular course of development *Antoine Wiertz* (1806-1865) pursued a style of art which is unique. Before his vast canvases, in the Wiertz museum in Brussels,

turbulently filled with wild fancies, most people confess their inability to understand him, and agree with Christian Brinton, who says, "It is less as an artist that this singular figure challenges attention than as the man who best typifies that nightmare which preceded the dawn of rationalism and democracy." And yet, there is strength in his pictures, if only of a powerful imagination run riot, and beauty too in many details, and nobility, and impatience of everything petty and commonplace. There is evidence of heroic self-sacrifice, of faith in something grander than the world has yet seen. There is genius of conception, but it is coupled with chaos of execution.

Much saner than Wiertz, *Louis Gallait* (1810-1887) is generally credited with being the leader in the new style of painting. *Leys* (1815-1869) had much in common with him, but unlike him studied the old German masters in preference to Rubens. In consequence there is noticeable in many pictures a harking back to the Middle Ages whence also the German and French artists, known as Romanticists, had sought inspiration. They, too, had emphasized color and



placed themselves in opposition to the Classicists. This explains why also the Belgian artists of the Gallait and Leys type are called Romanticists. It is, however, a noteworthy fact that the conditions which led to the Romantic movements in the three countries were different each from the other. In Germany it was the subject-matter and in France the interest in the technical manner that had given rise to the new schools. In Belgium the Romantic school was the natural result of a national temper reasserting itself, and of a newly born and almost fanatic patriotism.

Love of fatherland shows not only in admiration of its public men but also in appreciation of the peaceful conditions under which the lowlier people live. *Braekeleer* (1830-1888) and *Madou* (1796-1877), therefore, contemporaries of Gallait and Leys, delighted in scenes for which they found the prototypes in the pictures of their great countryman, Teniers.

In all these pictures the attitude of the artist towards his subject gradually grew to be of greater interest than the subject itself, so that the Belgians were singularly well prepared for the lessons

of the French landscapists of Barbizon who had discovered *le paysage intime*. This kind of landscape painting readily appears when artists endeavor to perceive the moods of nature.

The skill of the Belgian painters has grown in the nineteenth century with a luxuriance comparable only to the growth of a plant which a clever florist has kept back for a season that it may blossom forth at the appointed time with unusual brilliancy. Nothing is too difficult for the Belgians to-day. The solution of all the modern problems on which school after school of nineteenth-century artists have labored seems to be theirs easily. And what adds a special charm to their pictures and singles them out at all exhibitions is their freshness and youth. Like a young athlete who gracefully jumps a pole and, forgetful of the difficulty, seems to enjoy more the beauty of the performance and the control of his body than the magnitude of the task, so the Belgians appear to delight in skill not for its own sake but for the freedom of expression and beauty of execution which it vouchsafes.

## DUTCH PAINTING

The nineteenth century did not open auspiciously for Dutch art. The level was low, yet not so low that a reversion to better things followed as a necessary conclusion. The powerful personality of David of France made itself felt also in Holland; but neither the artists nor the public took kindly to the principles and ideas of his classic school. Classicism, therefore, has hardly a place in the history of Dutch art.

*Jan Willem Pieneman* (1779-1853), indeed, might be called a Classicist, but not one of the pure style, because he, too, permitted other influences to shape his career, notably those of the French Romanticists. It is better, therefore, to refer to the early Dutch artists of this period as transition painters, and to realize at once that the salvation of Dutch art did not come from without but from within. David's classicism served as the initiative not because it was accepted but because it was rejected. It could only be kept out of the country by having opposed to it another force, and this the Dutch began to look

for in their own past. They began to compare their modern pictures with those of their ancestors, and to their credit discovered that the subjects and technical aims were the same, but that the honest attitude of the artists toward their art had lost its place with them. This defect they set out to mend, and, thanks largely to the work of three men, — Josef Israels, Bernardus Blommers, and Adolf Artz, — they succeeded remarkably well. Fixing their attention on the really worthy things, they also rediscovered the lost skill, so that to-day, judged even by this standard, they take their place by the side of the best.

Their greatest man is *Josef Israels* (1824 —), once a poor, despised little Jew, to-day respected both as a man and as an artist far beyond the boundaries of his native land. There is something eternally sad yet wonderfully sweet in his art. We pity the woman sitting by the deathbed of her husband, and now alone in the world, but we rejoice at the thought that folk capable of such love still people this earth. With similar emotions we join the little group of the fisherman and his children, who are returning from

their mother's funeral. The man holds his baby in his arms, and we know that although the mother is dead the children will not want in love. Or let us look at the lonely Jew lost in thought, or at any other picture by Israels; everywhere we find the same noble outlook on life. He does not make it gay by "patching the old rags with motley strips and stripes," but by infusing into it the tenderness which is the result of right living and right thinking.

His technique is sufficient to his needs, although professional men have no difficulty in detecting its weak points. He himself is quoted as having remarked to Liebermann, "Barring Millet, there is no other artist who knows so little of drawing and painting as I, and has yet painted such good pictures."

Sunnier than the art of Israels is that of *Adolf Artz* (1837-1890), an excellent genre painter, who follows more distinctly the endeavors of the transition painters, notably of *Jan Bosboom* (1817-1891). The latter was especially good in the light of his church interiors; Artz, however, is best in his genre pieces of the lower and the



THE FISHERMAN'S CHILDREN

After the painting by Israels

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middle classes. Fully his equal is *Christoffel Bisschop* (1828—), whose art has been well characterized by the title of one of his pictures, "Sunshine in Home and Heart."

*Bernardus Blommers* (1845—) is the vigorous writer in prose compared with the poets Israels, Artz, and Bisschop. His coloring is gayer and his lines are less refined,—more suggestive of the active life that physically healthy people lead.

Several of these figure painters prefer a landscape to an interior as the setting of their figures; and show the same intimate understanding of silent nature as of human beings. The Dutch landscapists, in fact, are as important as the figure painters. Their best known representative is *Anton Mauve* (1838–1888), who in his cattle pieces almost equals the sweet melancholy of Israels. He considers the surrounding landscape as carefully as the animals, and as a colorist seems to pay special attention to those colors which appear in the high lights.

The two brothers *Willem Maris* (1815—) and *Jacob Maris* (1837–1899) have a broader outlook

than Mauve, intending to reveal the stable dignity of their country in their landscapes, although they, too, prefer to make the final appeal by some fine cattle or by an impressive windmill. Sometimes the sun is shining, but more frequently marvelous cloud formations remind one of the peculiar Dutch atmosphere.

*Hendrik Willem Mesdag* (1831—) loves his native land as well as they, but he sees its greatest charm in the sea which bounds it. He has noticed the ever-varying aspect of the waters and the accompanying changes of the effects of light. To paint these is his delight and his strength. He is undoubtedly one of the best modern painters of marines.

When men have the gift to see essentials, externals have less interest for them. When the subject charms them they pay less attention to its expression except in so far as it is absolutely necessary to serve their ends. It is, therefore, not astonishing that the Dutch artists should have been little influenced by the various continental schools, most of which were based on a search for new and better technical means.

They did not actively enter into the hunt for such means, though they accepted the best results. This was natural also for one other reason. Most of the more recent schools have struggled with the problem of intensely bright sunlight. Such light is rare in the moist climate of Holland, and since Holland in its varying moods is the subject of the Dutch artists, these latter, of course, had little occasion to join the Impressionistic movement. No people, on the other hand, could entirely withdraw from the struggle for something new in the outward appearance of pictures, which swept over Europe like wild-fire during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In Holland, therefore, several artists joined these movements, not as active participants, but as distant although most interested spectators. They took over into their own art whatever pleased their fancy. These painters may be called Individualists. Widely differing one from the other, they still have this in common, that they believe in the right of every artist to select subjects and expressions according to his own peculiar liking. Rarely, however,

have they regarded such freedom to be a license, as many of their Impressionistic neighbors have done.

Modern Dutch art has made no great stir in the world. It is quiet and appealing rather than dazzling and surprising. It is not brilliant, but it is exquisite. It is deservedly well liked by people of a contemplative turn of mind, and is passed unnoticed by those who pay attention only to the execution and forget that execution should not be the whole of the picture.

The development of Dutch art is singular. Without much heralding Rembrandt made his appearance, and with him the host of great men. Then there came a period of rest, and while after that all eyes were turned to France and people believed that only from France there could come salvation, the Dutch quietly went to work and created a new art as fine in its way as anything that had ever been done in Holland.



THE RETURN OF THE FISHING BOATS

After the painting by Mesdag

THE

AMERICAN

## CHAPTER VI

### PAINTING IN RUSSIA, DENMARK, AND SCANDINAVIA

#### RUSSIAN PAINTING

Russia has only slowly taken her place by the side of the nations of western Europe, for Asiatic half culture held her in a firm embrace. Down to the tenth century of the Christian era survivals of Greek art struggled with barbaric innovations, while Byzantine influences dominated the country from the time when the Grand Duchess Olga professed Christianity in 955 to the accession of Peter the Great in 1682. Since then western Europe has been the inspiration of Russian painting, and it is only recently that a national spirit has shown vigorous signs of existence.

Peter the Great, anxious to equal the splendor of the French court, summoned many foreign artists to Russia, but none of the truly great men cared to visit his land, so that the standard of art was set by inferior artists from France and Italy.



That Italian art in the eighteenth century stood on a low level is well known, and since this art was esteemed above all others in Russia, it is small wonder that the beginning of Russian painting is uninteresting. Men there were of diligence and patience, but they knew no worthy leaders and were not big enough to hew out a path of their own. Their training, moreover, was of the kind to stifle every vestige of individuality. The Academy, founded in 1757, prescribed rigid courses of technical study, while nothing was done to develop independent characters. Under these conditions it is to the credit of Russia that several men, nevertheless, rose to a sufficiently high level of art to render themselves worthy of mention among notable painters.

*Dmitri Levitski* (1735-1822) was a good portrait painter, and may be compared with Mme. Lebrun or with Mengs, while *Orest Kiprenski* (1783-1836) surpassed these painters to such an extent, especially in coloring and in breadth of conception, that Professor Muther actually mentions him in the same breath with Rubens. *Count Fedor Tolstoy* (1783-1828) deserves notice as a

many-sided artist, sculptor, designer, and painter, who dared to break with academic traditions, just as Prud'hon in France had revolted against the classicism of David.

*Aleksander Orlovski* (1777-1832) was the first good painter of military scenes, and *Aleksyey Venetsianov* (1779-1845) the only early Russian genre painter of note.

The successors of these men may be recognized partly in the so-called Academicians, of whom *Fidelio Bruni* (1800-1875) is the best, and partly in a group of artists whom one may collectively call Realists. Their realism is of various kinds. *Paul Fedotov* saw things from a moral and anecdotal point of view similar to that of Hogarth; *Vasili Perov* (1833-1882) viewed the world with the eyes of a socialist who had felt deeply the sadness of life among the lower classes of his native land; while *Ilya Ryepin* (1844—) impartially renders national themes, both past and present, just as they offer themselves to his keen artist's eyes. He is unquestionably one of the greatest artists of modern Russia. Breaking in his youth with the stilted conventionality of the Academy,

he has yet placed his mature knowledge at the service of the same Academy, that he may exert his influence on the younger generation. While his portraits of famous Russians have gained him the name of the Russian Lenbach, his greatest successes have been achieved with extended compositions. At times his realism is almost photographic, and deserves, in so far as it is so, no admiration. There is, moreover, in many of his pictures a scattering of interest due to the multiplicity of types introduced, of which one alone would suffice to give the pictures value. *Aleksander Ivanov* (1806–1858) frequently selected his subjects from antiquity, and painted them, like many modern Englishmen, with masterful archæological accuracy, believing that he could thus make real again events long past. *Valentin Syerov* (1865—) is a good portrait painter, and *Alfred von Kowalski-Wierurz* (1849—) one of the best painters of native genre. In his pictures which depict the wintry loneliness of his native land he is unexcelled.

In popular esteem none of these men can vie with *Vasili Vereshchagin* (1842–1904), who always



THE LONE WOLF  
After the painting by Kowalski



painted the naked truth and had a keen eye for the sensational. That one aim of art might be to please he did not know. He craved excitement and knew better than most men how to stir the soul to its very depth. Surcharged with emotion, his canvases, nevertheless, are quiet in lines. What could be more impressive than his large picture, "Forgotten," where a dead soldier lies alone on a white and barren plain with vultures hovering over him and a few satiated birds resting about him, while his fleshless arms indicate whence had come their repast! Vereshchagin always expresses himself clearly, just as his great literary compatriots do, but his technique, like theirs, is by no means faultless. Judged by the latter, both are mere infants when they are compared with the great French masters.

Of the earlier men who followed more or less in the lead of the continental Romanticists, *Karl Bryullov* (1799-1852), now almost forgotten, was once worshiped as if he had been a demigod. His great picture, the "Fall of Pompeii," made a stir in the art world not only of Russia but also of Italy, where it had been painted. Tumbling

houses, jet-black clouds, and unnatural rays of light illuminating human beings of classically beautiful forms and posed to please the most critical theatrical manager combine in a weird ensemble. The whole is of such pronounced unreality that not even an emotional spectator need experience any but an intellectual horror. This was Bryullov's first picture of importance, and it was also his last. He continued to live on the reputation which it brought him.

Among the landscape painters *Silvestr Shchedrin* (1791-1830) holds a prominent place. He died young, but left a series of such exquisite landscapes that those who have had an opportunity of studying many of them rank him as one of the best landscapists of any age, calling him the direct successor of Dujardin, Berchem, and Pynacker, and their equal in spirit.

The only painter of marines who could compete with Shchedrin was *Ivan Ayvazovski* (1817-1900). He was a rapid painter who loved loud effects, but who had such a marvelous eye for the grandeur of nature that his pictures are singularly impressive.



The present generation of artists seems to be following the lead of Ryepin, and to have selected as their motto the two words "national" and "realistic." This appeared very clearly from the Russian exhibition at the World's Fair in Paris in 1900, when some one hundred and thirty painters were represented, among whom *Korovin*, *Levitan*, *Maliavin*, *Purvit*, and *Wasnesov* seem to give the greatest promise for the future.<sup>1</sup>

## SWEDISH PAINTING

The Swedes have been called the French of the North. Their painting is brilliant, experimental, full of verve, and scintillating. But it has not always been thus. They, too, have had their period of growth, although it was short, for they made their *début* on the stage of the world with almost immediate dash and marvelous skill.

At first their artists were not stay-at-homes, so that most of their better men are perhaps rightly claimed for the French or German schools.

<sup>1</sup> Several other Russian painters have recently become known in America through exhibitions of their works. They are well discussed by Christian Brinton, in Appleton's *Booklovers Magazine*, February, 1906.

*Alexander Roslin* (1718–1793), the earliest Swedish painter of worth, lived in a palatial mansion in Paris and amassed a fortune as a successful portraitist of high society. Texture painting was his forte, so that the saying arose

Qui a figure de satin  
Doit bien être peint par Roslin.

*Karl Frederik von Breda* (1759–1818) was thoroughly English in style, adhering strictly to the principles of Reynolds and Lawrence, while *Nils Johan Blommér* (1816–1858) followed faithfully the German dictum that “the chief thing in a work of art is the soul.” He was, however, a lover of his native land, and endeavored to people his landscape with embodied visions of the Swedish national spirit. *Karl Johan Fahlkrantz* (1774–1861), who was a good landscapist, sought his inspiration from the earlier artists of the Netherlands, but blended with their teachings much romantic unreality. At all times he was a poet.

Another lover of the Dutch masters was *Lorenz August Lindholm* (1819—), who spent many years in Holland, and whose pictures always

showed the quiet spirit and conscientious work which is characteristic of the Dutch "Little Masters."

The greatest colorist among the earlier men was *Eggon Lundgren* (1815-1875), whose travels had taken him as far as India and Tunis, and whose northern heart embraced with truly southern warmth the charms of sunnier climes.

When the school of Düsseldorf was at its height many Swedes identified themselves with its teachings, but none of these men attained rank as masters. It was different with those who went to Paris or were attracted by the dazzling effects of the Piloty school in Munich; for many of them gained fame and a name favorably known wherever there is an interest in art.

The first among them worthy of mention is *Johan Frederik Höckert* (1826-1866); for in the words of Professor Muther he was the first Swede who "saw the world with the eyes of an artist," and who painted pictures for their artistic worth rather than for their subject. He was essentially interested in costume painting because of the color schemes which it enabled him to evolve.

*Hugo Birger* (1854-1887) and *Johan Kristoffer Bocklund* (1817-1880) were similarly enamored of costumes, the first, especially, seeking gorgeous effects of strange garments which he endeavored to paint in novel ways. When he selected a subject from the scenery of his native land, it was always for the sake of the unusual effects of reflected light.

In this respect no greater contrast is imaginable than that which exists between his work and that of *Eduard Bergh* (1828-1880), who loved nature for her own sake. Bergh was a man of power, whose thoughtful mind was more deeply impressed with the suggestive stillness of nature than with her passionate moods. The latter are passing manifestations, and for contemplative minds lack the stirring elements of nature's unfathomable solitude.

*Vilhelm van Gegerfelt* (1844 —) is another landscapist. He, however, takes his subjects from Italy, and cares more for a pleasing appearance than for truth. The same charge may also be brought against *August Hagborg* (1852-1875), who is best known for his views of the sea and

his pictures of fisher folk. In these pictures both his men and women are such by force of their surroundings and their costumes, but in essence they lack the ruggedness of people who know the treachery of the elements and the hardships of life.

By the side of these landscapists several historical painters have won recognition. *Gustav Cederström* (1845—) has painted historical subjects with soundness and a remarkably strong dramatic temper, besides showing much artistic ability. The latter quality is absent in the works of *Karl Gustaf Hellquist* (1851–1890), whose reputation rests on his honesty and straightforwardness of presentation. *Nils Fosberg* (1842—) is a more versatile man, whose wonderful command of the nude has won him many admirers.

*Georg von Rosen* (1843—) has been a puzzle to his critics because of the unevenness of his work. He deserves the credit, however, of having called the attention of the Swedes to the fine and thoughtful products of the northern masters of the sixteenth century. This was a blessing for them after they had become familiar with the

rather coarse workmanship of Courbet and some of his contemporaries. An entirely different stand has been taken by *Julius Kronberg* (1850—), who paints à la Makart voluptuous subjects in a voluptuous style.

*Hugo Salmson* (1843–1894) is best mentioned as the last of this list of artists, because he is in a sense the forerunner of the modern school of Swedish painters. At first he was influenced by Constant and later by Meissonier, until the success of Bastien-Lepage caused him to become a follower of this master. At all times Salmson has known how to be the successful popularizer of new styles. No doubt he is a genius, but his individuality is not strong enough to make him a master.

The new generation has started with Salmson's Bastien-Lepage style, and has steadfastly refused to follow any but the most modern of the modern. Among the landscape painters *Per Eckström*, *Prince Eugen* (1865—), *Nils Krüger*, and *Karl Nordström* (1855—) are most favorably known. The solitude of nature appeals to all of them. Winter, too, is one of their favorite





HANS MAKART  
The Hunt of Diana



[illegible]

subjects. *Georg Arsenius* (1818 —) is an animal painter whose fame rests largely on his gay pictures of Parisian races.

Among the figure painters *Andreas Zorn* (1860 —) enjoys an international reputation. His eye is quick and true and his hand is sure. He sees everything at a glance and seems to paint it with one bold stroke. This gives to his work an immediateness which is most captivating. Zorn is an experimenter in drawing and coloring, but he is always successful. He is the favorite child of the muse of painting.

Equally as facile as Zorn, but not so many-sided, *Carl Larsson* (1855 —) is known as a “coquettish, mobile, and capricious” painter, who has seen much and “babbles about it in a way that is witty and stimulating, if not novel.” Like Zorn he does not confine himself to figure painting, but has created some excellent landscapes.

*Richard Bergh* (1858 —) is less conspicuously brilliant than either of the preceding artists, but is fully as great a man. He is of a contemplative turn of mind and seems to understand the moods of nature. His technique is excellent, but not so

coquettishly insistent as that of Larsson or so brilliant as that of Zorn, so that his subject-matter has a better chance of conveying his meaning to the spectator.

The art life of Sweden is constantly growing in worth and in intensity, and the visit to the Swedish section in any exhibition is sure to be thoroughly profitable and enjoyable.

#### NORWEGIAN AND FINNISH PAINTING

Norwegian painting dates from the secession of Norway from Denmark in 1814, when the national pride of the people began to exert itself in all departments of life. Remembering that the whole country has less than half as many inhabitants as New York City, one stands aghast at the place which her artists have taken in the world of art.

*Johan Christian Dahl* (1788-1857), like most early Norwegian artists, found his country too small a sphere of activity. He spent the best years of his life in Dresden, but did not tire of singing the beauties of Norway in his excellent landscapes. Equally successful in this sphere

of art were *Hans Gude* (1825 —) and *Otto Sinding* (1842 —), who went to Düsseldorf for inspiration. The latter was a versatile genius of feverish inconsistency, who divided his time between painting and literary or scenic interests. But "in all his versatility," as one of his compatriots has said, "it is difficult to recognize other features than those marked by will and energy." He also painted genre scenes, although in this class of work he was not so successful as a somewhat older man, *Adolf Tidemand* (1814-1876), whom his countrymen are proud to call the first Norwegian figure painter of note.

Thus far the Norwegian painters had looked to Germany for instruction, but the time came when they, like all the world, turned to France and fell under the influence of the open-air painters. Then they realized that a new chord had been struck in art, and they decided to convert their fellow-citizens to the new faith. They went abroad to get their training, but, unlike their fathers, they returned home and endeavored to found a national art. Without definite rules

they may, nevertheless, be said to have founded a Fighting Brotherhood, writing on their banner, as it were, the words "forward" and "home."

*Eilif Petersen* (1852 —) and *Hans Heyerdahl* (1857 —) mark the transition from the old order of things to the new, combining in their works the best of their earlier training with much of the charm of the open-air painters. Heyerdahl is the greater of the two, without being a profoundly thoughtful painter. "His talent lies in a sense and voluptuous enjoyment of beauty, a love of delicate form, and an intoxication in the sweetness of color."

The real leaders of the Fighting Brotherhood were *Erik Werenskiöld* (1855 —) and *Christian Krohg* (1852 —). Werenskiöld was an uncompromising antagonist of academic instruction and the teachings of old picture galleries. Nature was his mistress, and exhibitions of contemporaneous artists his sources of recreation. All the most modern movements — naturalism, open-air painting, and impressionism — found him a ready follower. He painted a great many subjects, but attained his highest rank in

portraiture, in which branch he has not been surpassed by any other Norwegian.

To Krohg the new order of things meant not only an onward movement in art but also one in the moral and intellectual life of the human race. He desired to have his nation lead the world, and believed that it was necessary to convince her of the soundness of the new tendencies in art, if she was to free herself from old traditions both moral and political. His best works are his pictures from Skagen, which "are free from every purpose but that of delighting the eye."

Far more cosmopolitan than either, *Fritz Thaulow* (1847—) has made an international name for himself. At first he painted beautiful winter landscapes in the open-air style, generally crossed by a river and specked with willow bushes. Latterly he has gone farther afield. Beauty is the keynote of all his work. He seems to derive pleasure from painting, and certainly knows how to transmit it to the spectator.

*Gerhard Munthe* (1849—) is well known for his finely colored landscapes; his importance,

however, lies in another field, — his fanciful illustrations of northern fairy tales. "From the very first these fancies seemed to be intended as patterns for some kind of art needlework; and since then a number of cloths woven after the old national style have appeared, which, in choice of color and technical execution, are in close imitation of Munthe's designs." It is because he was entirely unhampered in the selection of colors in painting these fanciful subjects that he has created harmonies which have the charm of wholesome novelty for people whose eyes are weakened by an art which has been called "internationally fashionable."

*Christian Skredsvig* (1854 —) and *Amaldus Nielsen* (1838 —) are the remaining painters of note of this so-called Fighting Brotherhood. Skredsvig, whose ideal Corot had been, represents the gentler side of Norwegian art. He is a poet who knows well how to create a definite mood. Nielsen is a landscape painter.

The present generation of artists is firmly rooted in the principles for which their elders fought. They are good colorists, who, on the



technical side of art, seek for illusory effects, and on the other side endeavor to express the spirit which they believe characterizes their national life. *Gustav Wentzel* (1859—) is a leader among these artists, a man of force and honesty, who paints correctly and feels deeply. "Most of these artists are still quite young,"—these are the concluding words of the official publication on Norway at the World's Fair in Paris in 1900,—"but when we consider what they and their slightly older fellow-artists have already produced in the way of art that bears evidence of feeling, delight in beauty, and the stamp of personality, we have every reason to hope for a bright future for Norwegian art."

In Finland one finds an art that shares the characteristic elements partly of Swedish and partly of Norwegian art. Her painters have not joined the schools of Russia where they politically belong. *Albert Edelfelt* (1854-1905) is the best known of the Finnish artists. His pictures have a luminosity that reminds one of the best Frenchmen; his choice of subjects, however, and his depth of feeling stamp him

as an adherent of the Germanic principles. If one would realize to the fullest extent what the transplanting of art from Italy in the thirteenth century to northern climes in the nineteenth century has meant, one should compare the "Noli me tangere" (Christ and Magdalene) by Duccio or by Fra Angelico with the same subject by Edelfelt.

The depth of religious feeling is the same in both cases, but its expression is fundamentally different. With the Italians Christ was a heavenly being, very beautiful and benign; with Edelfelt he is not less kind, but he is painted as he once doubtless walked the earth, a man of humble station whom gentlefolk to-day might as readily despise as their kindred did of yore. The royal demeanor and divine character which the old-time halo reflects have disappeared. The fine landscape of ideal charms has given way to a natural although not less beautiful view of a country lane. To accept the Christ of Edelfelt one must indeed be a Christian at heart. Nominal followers of the Nazarene will prefer the Italian king to the Finnish countryman.

*Axel Gallén* is another Finnish painter of note, who latterly has endeavored to express with simple, severe lines and colors the innermost experiences of a human soul.

## DANISH PAINTING

The Danes were the first of the Scandinavians to feel themselves a nation in the realm of art. They have little affinity either with the Swedes or with the Norwegians, and reveal a character that seems hewn out of the same block with that of the Dutch. "What they have to express," says Professor Muther, "seems almost Dutch, but it is whispered less distinctly and with more of mystery, with that dim, approximative, hazarded utterance which betrays that it is Danish."

The earliest Danish painters of note lived at a time when academic classicism ruled the minds of most men; when the *how* mattered more than the *what*. *Nicolai Abraham Abildgård* (1742-1809), a great admirer of Michelangelo, and *Jens Juel*, a graceful portraitist, are gratefully remembered by the Danes as masters of sound learning.

The foremost position, however, as a leader in art belongs to *Christoffer Vilhelm Eckersberg* (1783–1853). He was one of those remarkable people who can teach without practicing well themselves. His technique was very one-sided and actually crude. His importance lay in his opposition to the forced sentiment that many continentals at that time were introducing into art. “My good pupils,” he once said, “always wish to do better than God Almighty; they ought to be glad if they could do only as well.” His pupils and friends understood him, and Denmark developed an independent art of her own. It was characterized by soundness of conception and accuracy of observation, but also, unfortunately, by crudeness of technique. For fully a generation the desire of founding a national art and the exalted opinion of their work prevented the Danish artists from learning the lessons which the best French and German masters had begun to teach. There was, so to speak, a Chinese wall about Danish art. Within this wall several men did creditable work, although their seclusion prevented them from doing what they otherwise



AT THE GATES OF DALBY

After the painting by Salmson

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might have done. Their achievements lay along two lines, genre and landscape.

*Christen Dalsgård* (1824—), *Julius Exner* (1825—), *Vilhelm Marstrand* (1810–1873), and *Frederik Vermehren* (1823—) were the best painters of genre; and what distinguishes them pleasantly from other genre painters is their national simplicity. Their figures act as they should act, without undue reference to the spectator. It is as if these painters had too high a regard for the public to stoop to the telling of anecdotes. They told tales from life, but, on the other hand, they did not penetrate the depths of the national character. Their subjects were Danish, but there is nothing to indicate this except an occasional touch of scenery or of costume. In feeling they are no more Danish than cosmopolitan. Almost the same is true, although to a lesser degree, of the landscapists, — *Peter Kyhn* (1819—) and *Peter Kristian Skovgård* (1817–1875), — because the moods of nature if accurately produced are less readily disguised. Skovgård interprets the beauty of Danish beech woods with singular success, while the poetic eye of Kyhn discerns in his



native land sceneries that are akin in spirit to the national ballads and fairy tales.

Two of the oldest artists among these crude Independents, *Johan Thomas Lundbye* (1818-1848) and *Jörgen Valentin Sonne* (1801-1890), struck out on individual paths. The former painted animals and had an especially keen eye for the "sornolent temperament" of cows; while the latter excelled in battle scenes and pictures of Danish low life. In these he resembles the other painters of genre.

Priding herself on the successes of her artists, and not a little conceited over the triumph of Thorwaldsen, Denmark had developed a national school, but at the expense of a thorough mastery of the artistic mediums. The natural result was a reversion of feeling, so that in the sixties and seventies the much cherished national art gave way to a new movement. Artists went outside the narrow Danish boundaries, and stood aghast before the strides that other men in more progressive countries had made. These achievements they desired to emulate, and this left them little time to consider the individual character of their

own small country. Very properly, therefore, these men have been called Cosmopolitans.

*Karl Bloch* (1834–1890) was the best known of these Cosmopolitans, especially on account of his excellent technique. In subject-matter he was less satisfactory. He continued to paint genre pictures, but had lost the simplicity and spontaneity of his predecessors. He tried to be humorous, but his humor was forced; he had skill, but he was wanting in artistic temperament. And what is true of him is also true of the majority of his friends and followers. Their importance is only historical. The Danes, nevertheless, remember them gratefully, because they taught their successors the importance of a sound technique without which it would have been impossible to reëstablish in Denmark a national art on such firm foundations as distinguish it to-day. The men who have labored and are still laboring for this end are called National Individualists.

Roughly speaking, they are divisible into two groups, — those who, like the so-called Impressionists, are open-air painters, and those who have not accepted the tenets of this school. *Per*

*Severin Krøyer* (1851—) is the pioneer of the entire movement. His technique, which is most excellent, is adequate to solve the most difficult problems of light and composition; and he does this with such ease that only experts appreciate the greatness of the task. Moreover, his artistic personality is no less perfect, thus enabling him to please every one.

*Julius Paulsen* (1860—) is almost the equal of Krøyer. Most of the other painters, however, are less versatile, each excelling in his own peculiar sphere. Among the open-air painters who know how to surround figures and forms with poetic charms of light *Vilhelm Hammershøi* (1864—), *Joachim Skovgård* (1856—), and many others have made a good name for themselves. At every exhibition, in fact, new men make their appearance, who by the invariable excellence of their work prove how high is the level and how secure are the foundations of modern Danish art.

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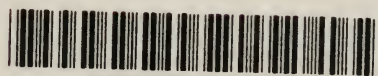
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